

AVIAN FLU OUTBREAK

ANDREW JACOBS

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BEIJING — With confirmation that a sixth person has died from a mysterious avian-borne virus, Chinese officials escalated their response Friday, advising people to avoid live poultry, dispatching virologists to chicken farms across the country and slaughtering more than 20,000 birds at a wholesale market in Shanghai where the virus, known as H7N9, was detected in a pigeon.

News of the outbreak



A worker unloads a chicken at a chicken whole sale market Friday, April 5, 2013 in Shanghai, China.

(AP Photo/E. Hoshiko)

dominated China's main Internet portals. There were photographs of workers in white coveralls carrying out the culling in Shanghai and recommendations that people take banlangen, an herbal cold remedy that is a mainstay of Chinese households.

Anxious residents have been crowding emergency rooms at the first sign of respiratory problems. And at a KFC restaurant in Beijing, employees stood idle as mounds of fried chicken went largely unsold.

"They say it's OK to eat cooked chicken, but I'd rather not take the chance," Zhang Minyu, 41, a housewife, said as she coaxed her young son to instead order a soft-serve ice cream.

Continued on Page 3

Indecent Proposal?



President Barack Obama speaks at the Police Academy in Denver. A senior administration official said Friday, April 5, 2013 that Obama's proposed budget will call for reductions in the growth of federal Social Security pensions and other benefit programs in an attempt to strike a compromise with congressional Republicans.

(AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

Obama seeks deal, proposes cuts to Social Security

WASHINGTON (AP) — Seeking an elusive middle ground, President Barack Obama is proposing a 2014 budget that embraces tax increases abhorred by Republicans as well as reductions, loathed by liberals, in the growth of Social Security and other benefit programs.

The plan, if ever enacted, could touch almost all Americans.

The rich would see tax increases, the poor and the elderly would get smaller annual increases in their benefits, and middle in-

come taxpayers would slip into higher tax brackets despite Obama's repeated vows not to add to the tax burden of the middle class.

His proposed changes, once phased in, would mean a cut in Social Security benefits of nearly \$1,000 a year for an average 85-year-old, smaller cuts for younger retirees. Obama proposed much the same without success to House Speaker John Boehner in December of 2012.

The response Friday was

dismissive from Republicans and hostile from liberals, labor and advocates for the elderly.

But the proposal aims to tackle worrisome deficits that are adding to the national debt and placing a long-term burden on the nation, prompting praise from independent deficit hawks.

Obama's budget also proposes new spending for public works projects, preschool education and for job and benefit assistance for veterans.

"It's not the president's ide-

al approach to our budget challenges, but it is a serious compromise proposition that demonstrates that he wants to get things done," said White House press secretary Jay Carney.

The budget, which Obama will release Wednesday to cover the budget year beginning Oct. 1, proposes spending cuts and revenue increases that would result in \$1.8 trillion in deficit reductions over 10 years.

Continued on Page 4

Poll Positions:

Path to citizenship divides congress and confuses country

JULIA PRESTON

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A path to citizenship for the 11 million immigrants living in the United States illegally has become central to the debate on overhauling the

tional poll released March 21 by the Public Religion Research Institute and the Brookings Institution, 63 percent of Americans said immigrants here illegally should be allowed to be-

about citizenship in a slightly different way, only 43 percent said they would give citizenship to the immigrants, while 24 percent said the immigrants should be allowed to stay as per-

the immigration system: Its procedures are unfamiliar and puzzling to many Americans. The most important overhaul proposals in play would all modify or expand on a core progression in existing law. Currently, certain immigrants who have family ties or employment prospects here can become legal permanent residents with a green card. That is the first step on the path to citizenship, because permanent residents can apply to naturalize after five years, or three years if they are married to citizens. Lawmakers are wrangling about if and when immigrants who are here illegally should be allowed to apply for green cards, and whether to create a new class of residents who would not be permitted to apply for citizenship. A political fight is coming on this issue. Democrats hope to raise or eliminate visa caps, at least temporarily, to allow applicants to move through rapidly, and they want to make new green cards available for immigrants who finish their provisional term.

Two leading Republicans in the negotiations, Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida and Rep. Raul R. Labrador of Idaho, reject any separate path to citizenship, insisting that formerly illegal immigrants should only be able to apply for green cards through the existing system, a plan that could add many years before naturalization if current backlogs are not sharply reduced. Republicans, whose voters, recent polls show, are more skeptical about the value of immigration, are reluctant to increase visa numbers. They have proposed freeing up visas by eliminating some relatives of immigrants from eligibility. Lawmakers on all sides are facing intense pressure from immigrants, especially Latinos, who have been pushing hard for a direct path to citizenship.

"Since the end of slavery we have not created a second class of Americans," said Angelica Salas, executive director of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, "and we should not start now." □



Rep. Raul Labrador (R-Idaho), left, during a House Judiciary Committee hearing on immigration reform at the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington. A path to citizenship for the 11 million immigrants living in the country illegally has become central to the debate on overhauling the immigration system, but recent polls have indicated that many Americans are still making up their minds on the issue.

(Christopher Gregory/The New York Times)

immigration system, but recent polls have indicated that many Americans are still making up their minds on the issue, with doubts persisting about what such a path would mean in practice.

The debate could move into high gear next week when a bipartisan group in the Senate is expected to introduce a broad bill, including proposals to allow immigrants here illegally to gain legal status and eventually become citizens. A bipartisan group in the House is also in the final stages of preparing a comprehensive bill.

In six nationwide nonpartisan polls released since January, at least 70 percent of Americans said they supported options allowing those immigrants to remain in the country with some form of legal status. Generally only about one-quarter of those polled said the immigrants should not be allowed to stay.

But results vary widely when Americans are asked whether legal status should include the possibility of citizenship. In a large na-

come citizens if they met certain requirements.

In a poll published a week later by the Pew Research Center, which asked

manent residents but not citizens. The 20-point gap points to a difficulty facing lawmakers as they sell their proposals to revamp

U.S. agrees to set new rules for immigration raids

KIRK SEMPLE

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Federal authorities have agreed to establish new policies governing the conduct of immigration officers during raids, including restrictions on how and when agents can enter private homes, the source of widespread ire and anxiety among immigrants.

The rules are included in a settlement that was approved by a U.S. District Court judge Thursday, concluding a 6-year-old class-action lawsuit. The suit contended that in eight raids in 2006 and 2007, Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, without court warrants or other legal justification, forced their way into the homes of Latino families on Long Island and in Westchester County, N.Y.

"No longer will ICE agents have free rein to invade

the homes of immigrants, especially Latino immigrants, and be as abusive as they want without any worry that they might be reprimanded," said Juan Cartagena, president of LatinoJustice PRLDEF, an advocacy group in New York City that, along with the Center for Constitutional Rights and the private firm Winston & Strawn, represented the 22 plaintiffs. The settlement also ordered the federal government to pay \$1 million in damages and fees — \$36,000 to each plaintiff and the rest to cover lawyers' fees.

Brian Hale, a spokesman for Immigration and Customs, an arm of the Department of Homeland Security, said the agency had no comment on the settlement.

The raids were among hundreds conducted in the New York metropolitan re-

gion and across the country as part of national enforcement operations that officials said were intended to catch and deport dangerous criminals, and immigrants previously ordered to leave the country.

The raids were widely criticized including by local officials, and spurred numerous lawsuits.

Most of the lawsuits to emerge from the raids in the New York region have been resolved, though the latest settlement appeared to be the only one that has required federal policy changes, immigration lawyers said.

The plaintiffs in the suit contended that during the raids, armed agents surrounded their homes in the predawn hours, pounded on windows and shouted orders to open up. When occupants opened the doors, the plaintiffs con-

tended, the agents barged inside — in at least one instance with guns drawn — then swept through the homes, corralling occupants for interrogations.

Law enforcement agents without a judicial warrant are permitted to enter a home only under certain conditions, including if they receive consent.

A central point of contention in the case was what constituted valid consent. "There was no opportunity to say, 'Please don't come into my house,'" said Ghita Schwarz, senior staff attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights, and a plaintiffs' lawyer in the case.

Beatriz Velasquez, 18, one of the plaintiffs in the suit, was 12 years old and alone with her younger sister in Westbury, on Long Island, when immigration agents showed up. □



Members of the 374th Airlift Wing of U.S. Air Force work on a C-130 aircraft at Andersen U.S. Air Force Base in Guam. (AP Photo/Koji Ueda)

North Korea threats spark buzz, not panic, on Guam

HAGATNA, Guam (AP) — C.J. Urquico has lived on Guam for 19 years so he's used to a military backdrop to everyday life. Navy ships visit, Air Force jets fly overhead and war games are played off the Pacific island's shores.

There soon will be another military element in this U.S. territory — a defense system will be installed to shoot down incoming missiles and warheads. Its deployment comes amid intensifying threats from North Korea, which recently listed Guam among its targets for a nuclear attack on the United States. That laid-back Guam is a named player in a nuclear showdown is the talk of the island. But at least for now, the population of about 180,000 is taking it in stride and not running for cover. "The worst thing that can happen is we allow it to terrorize us," said Urquico, a 36-year-old creative director for a telecommunications company. And while "there's no real sinister feeling in the air," he added: "People are definitely paying attention. I mean, how many times do we ever trend on Twitter?"

The remote, 209-square-mile island in the South Pacific is no stranger to international conflict. The island's waters are a graveyard for rusting equipment from World War II and the oldest residents remember living under Japanese occupation.

Many residents aren't taking the North Korean threat too seriously. The annual typhoon season may be a bigger concern. "Fortunately everybody has concrete homes here so we're sort of a bunker already," joked Leonard Calvo, vice president of Calvo Enterprises, a firm that invests in insurance, real estate, media and retail and other businesses in Guam and other islands. "I think this guy from North Korea is just puffing out his chest. A lot of people are numb to it." The island's social media is abuzz with memes mimicking North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Un, with one joking that he is worried about "Guam bombs," a popular term for beat-up, used cars on the island. Not everyone is taking the issue lightly. Headlines about the threats have flashed across the island's main news website for the past week, and some residents are brainstorming plans in case the worst-case scenario comes true. Guam Gov. Eddie Baza Calvo said the government is providing information to help residents prepare, including guidance for where to hide if radiation is in the air. "As a governor and a father and a husband and a grandfather, I do have some concerns because of the proximity of Guam to North Korea," he said. "I've never heard anyone make a direct threat to Guam". □

China: Response escalated to avian flu outbreak

Continued from front

Roughly 10 years after Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS, began here and spread across the globe, infecting more than 8,000 people and killing nearly 800, the deadly influenza outbreak is testing a government known for its lack of transparency and reluctance to divulge damaging news.

The timing has not helped: The Chinese public have already been outraged by record-level air pollution this year, and frustrated by the government's apparent inability to determine the source or cause of deaths of more than 16,000 pigs found floating last month in the river that supplies drinking water for Shanghai.

Although some critics have questioned why it took so long for officials to publicly

that first came to us and volunteered the information," said Gregory Hartl, a spokesman for the World Health Organization in Geneva. "Their response has been excellent."

Health officials around the world are nervously monitoring the outbreak, which has killed nearly half of the 14 people in whom the virus has been diagnosed. What they fear most is that the disease will mutate so that it can spread from human to human, but there has yet to be a confirmed case of transmission between humans. However, the state media Friday reported that Shanghai officials had placed in quarantine a person with flulike symptoms who had contact with a victim of H7N9. Experts say the virus appears to respond to existing influenza medications like Tamiflu and Relenza. In the United States, federal

organization and its Chinese counterpart that had helped enable China to post the sequence of the new virus on a public database. He said Americans planning to go to China should still go, but follow longstanding recommendations to avoid birds and other animals.

John Oxford, a professor of virology at Queen Mary, University of London, warned of a potential pandemic should H7N9 undergo a mutation that allows human-to-human transmission.

"On my earthquake scale, I'm quite concerned because influenzas have a greater history of emerging and spreading," he said.

His worries were heightened, he said, by the relatively high fatality rate and the virus' apparent spread through poultry without any evident signs of illness.

"If a flock of chickens or



Chickens are sold at a market on Friday, April 5, 2013, in Shanghai, China. With confirmation that a sixth person has died from a mysterious avian-borne virus, Chinese officials escalated their response Friday, advising people to avoid live poultry, dispatching virologists to chicken farms across the country and slaughtering more than 20,000 birds at a wholesale market in Shanghai where the virus, known as H7N9, was detected in a pigeon.

(AP Photo)

announce the outbreak of the H7N9 virus, public health experts have so far commended the government for responsiveness and transparency in the five days since officials identified the first victims. "It was the Ministry of Health and Family Planning

health officials Thursday said they had begun working on a vaccine for H7N9. At the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's first news conference about the H7N9 outbreak, its director, Dr. Thomas Frieden, said there was close cooperation between his

ducks get H5N1, it will kill them and set off alarm bells, but this virus seems to be a bit more tricky," he said, referring to another avian virus that since 2003 has decimated poultry stocks in Southeast Asia and killed more than 300 people. □

Hillary Clinton headlines NY women's conference

JOCELYN NOVECK

KEN THOMAS

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Friday at a forum on global women's issues that the rights of women represent "the unfinished business of the 21st century" in the United States and around the world, receiving a rapturous reception for one of her first speeches since departing the Obama administration.

Clinton, a potential 2016 presidential candidate, offered no new clues about her future at the annual two-day Women in the World summit.

She said the mission of gender equality is not limited to the developing world, pointing to the need for more women in the United States to achieve equality with men.

"If America is going to lead the way we expect ourselves to lead, we need to empower women here at home to participate fully in our economy and our society. We need to make

equal pay a reality," Clinton said, pointing to the need to extend family and medical leave and encourage women and girls to pursue careers in math and science. "We need to invest in our people so they

tury, and it is the work we are called to do," Clinton said. "I look forward to being your partner in all the days and years ahead. Let's keep fighting for opportunity and dignity."

The former first lady and

the globe, featuring appearances by actresses Angelina Jolie and Meryl Streep. It was Clinton's second high-profile speech this week and coincided with the announcement Thursday of her new memoir about her years as secretary of state.

Clinton has addressed the forum before, but the speculation about her future was an undercurrent in the audience.

Tina Brown, editor in chief of Newsweek and the Daily Beast, the summit's sponsor, received loud cheers during her introduction of Clinton when she teased, "Of course, the big question now about Hillary is what's next."

Clinton said the world was "changing beneath our feet," urging advocates to encourage developing nations around the globe to embrace a 21st-century approach that makes the rights of women a central issue in foreign and domestic policy.

Friday's agenda included a panel on technology moderated by Clinton's

daughter, Chelsea, discussions on women's rights in India and Libya and a luncheon interview with Susan Rice, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Underscoring the plight of women across the globe, attendees saw an emotional moment on Thursday from Jolie, who introduced Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani teenager who was shot in the head by the Taliban for advocating for girls' education.

"Today I'm going to announce the happiest moment of my life," the 15-year-old said in a brief video from Britain, wearing a bright red headscarf and at one point shyly covering her face with her hands. She said that thanks to the new "Malala's Fund," which she will administer, a new school in her homeland would be built for 40 girls. "Let us turn the education of 40 girls into 40 million girls," she said.

Malala has garnered huge global attention since she was shot in the head in October by Taliban attackers angered by her activism. □



Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton speaking at the Women in the World Conference on Friday, April 5, 2013 in New York. Clinton said Friday that the rights of women represent "the unfinished business of the 21st century" in the United States and around the world, receiving a rapturous reception for one of her first speeches since departing the Obama administration. (AP Photo/Marc Bryan-Brown)

can live up to their own God-given potential."

"This truly is the unfinished business of the 21st cen-

New York senator was the keynote speaker at a star-studded conference focusing on women across

Obama seeks deal, proposes cuts to Social Security

Continued from front

That figure would replace \$1.2 trillion in automatic spending cuts that are poised to take effect over the next 10 years if Congress and the president

don't come up with an alternative, thus delivering a net increase in deficit reduction of \$600 billion.

Counting reductions and higher taxes that Congress and Obama have approved since 2011, the

2014 budget would contribute to \$4.3 trillion in total deficit reduction by 2023.

The budget wouldn't affect the \$85 billion in cuts that kicked in last month for this budget year.

A key feature of Obama's

plan is a revised inflation adjustment called "chained CPI." This new formula would effectively curb annual increases in a broad swath of government programs but would have its biggest impact on Social Security. By encompassing Obama's offer to Boehner, R-Ohio, the plan would also include reductions in Medicare spending, much of it by targeting payments to health care providers and drug companies. The Medicare proposal also would require wealthier recipients to pay higher premiums or co-pays.

Obama's budget proposal also calls for additional tax revenue, primarily by placing a 28 percent cap on deductions and other tax exclusions. That plan would affect wealthy taxpayers as would a new administration proposal to place limits on tax-preferred re-

irement accounts for millionaires and billionaires.

Obama made the same offer to Boehner in December when he and the speaker were negotiating ways of avoiding a steep, so-called fiscal cliff of combined across-the-board spending cuts and sweeping tax increases caused by the expiration of Bush-era tax rates. Boehner rejected that plan and ultimately Congress approved tax increases that were half of what Obama had sought.

"If you look at where the president's final offer and Boehner were ... they were extremely close to each other," said Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. "We do think that it's a very good sign that the president has included real entitlement reforms in the budget." □

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Gang member arrested in US corrections killing

STEVEN K. PAULSON
Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — A white supremacist prison gang member was arrested and another was still being sought for questioning Friday in the death of Colorado's prisons chief as authorities investigated whether the gang had any ties to the killing.

James Lohr, who has the words "Hard" and "Luck" tattooed where his eyebrows would be, was taken into custody early Friday in Colorado Springs. He was wanted for questioning in the slaying of Department of Corrections Director Tom Clements.

Authorities believe Lohr was in contact with gang associate Evan Ebel days before the killings of Clements and pizza delivery man Nate Leon. Police said they believe Ebel killed Leon and Clements less than a week before he died in a Texas shootout, but the motive is unclear. Clements was shot to death March 19 in Monument, just north of Colorado Springs. Leon was killed two days earlier. His body was found in the Denver suburb of Golden.

Colorado Springs police arrested Lohr after a short foot chase that started when officers tried to stop the car he was driving, according to a statement. Lohr was booked on felony evading charges and also held on three separate outstanding arrest warrants unrelated to the Clements case. He is scheduled to appear in court Monday.

Authorities issued an alert Wednesday asking other law enforcement agencies to be on the lookout for Lohr and Thomas Guolee, both of Colorado Springs, who were identified as 211

Crew members. Ebel was a member of the same gang. Lohr, 47, and Guolee, 31, are not being called suspects in Clements' death, but their names surfaced during the investigation, El Paso County sheriff's spokesman Jeff Kramer said. Both were wanted on warrants unrelated to the Clements investigation. Kramer has said it was possible that one or both of the men were headed to Nevada or Texas.

Guolee's mother, Deborah Eck, told The Denver Post that Guolee called her husband a week and a half ago to ask for a ride to the police station so he could turn himself in for what she believed was a parole violation. But she said they never heard back from him. Police came to her house Wednesday looking for Guolee.

"One cop said if he would have turned himself in for violation of probation, he probably wouldn't be in the situation he was now," Eck told the newspaper. Lohr has been wanted in Las Animas County in southeastern Colorado. He was arrested for violating a protection order in Trinidad on Dec. 1, 2012, after police found that he'd been drinking with friends at a tattoo shop. According to court documents, drinking was a violation of a protective order against him, and he was arrested. Lohr then failed to appear in court in that case Feb. 20, and a warrant was issued for his arrest.

Lohr is bald in his booking photo. In addition to the words on his eyebrows, he has a shamrock — a tattoo favored by some 211 Crew members — near his right eye.

Lohr has a criminal re-

This Friday, April 5, 2013 photo provided by the El Paso County Sheriff's Office shows 47-year-old James Lohr.

Lohr, a white supremacist prison gang member, was arrested Friday in the death of Colorado's prisons chief as authorities investigated whether the gang had any ties to the killing.

(AP Photo/El Paso County SO)

cord going back to 1992. In 1996, after he pleaded guilty to burglarizing a home, court records show he was ordered to have no contact with his estranged wife after she told police he repeatedly broke into her home and stole items to pawn.

In 2006, Lohr was charged with burglary with a weapon and assault causing serious bodily injury. Court records show those charged



were dismissed because of a lack of evidence.

Court records show Guolee was arrested in 2001 after a member of the Crips gang told Colorado Springs police he was jumped by Guolee and another gang member because they believed he was a member of a rival gang. The witness told police Guolee and the other gang member punched and kicked him in the face and left him bleeding.

In 2007, Guolee was charged with assault and intimidating a witness while in the El Paso County jail after an inmate said he was assaulted by three men, including Guolee, because they thought he was going to testify against a suspect in another case. □

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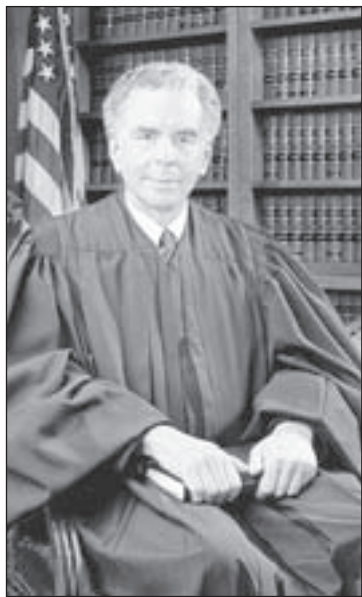
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US judge makes morning-after pill available to all



U.S. District Judge Korman of New York.
(AP Photo)

L. NEUMEISTER
L. NEERGAARD
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The morning-after pill might become as easy to buy in the U.S. as aspirin. In a scathing rebuke accusing the Obama administration of letting election-year politics trump science, a federal judge ruled Friday that women of any age should be able to buy emergency contraception without a doctor's prescription. Today, women can do that only if they prove at the pharmacy that they're 17 or older; everyone else

must see a doctor first. U.S. District Judge Edward Korman blasted the government's decision on age limits as "arbitrary, capricious and unreasonable" and ordered an end to the restrictions within 30 days. The Justice Department was evaluating whether to appeal.

President Barack Obama had supported the 2011 decision setting age limits, and White House spokesman Jay Carney said Friday the president hasn't changed his position. "He believes it was the right common-sense approach

to this issue," Carney said. If the court order stands, Plan B One-Step and its generic versions could move from behind pharmacy counters to drug-store shelves — ending a decade-plus struggle by women's groups for easier access to the pills, which can prevent pregnancy if taken soon enough after unprotected sex. Saying the sales restrictions can make it hard for women of any age to buy the pills, Korman described the administration's decision, in the year before the 2012 presidential and congressional elections, as

"politically motivated, scientifically unjustified and contrary to agency precedent." Women's health specialists hailed the ruling. "It has been clear for a long time that the medical and scientific community think this should be fully over the counter and is safe for women of all ages to use," said Dr. Susan Wood, who resigned as Food and Drug Administration's women's health chief in 2005 to protest the Bush administration's delay over Plan B. Half of the pregnancies in the U.S. every year are unintended. □

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Obama apologizes for 'best-looking' comment

Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama has apologized to California's top lawyer for causing a stir when he called her "the best-looking attorney general" at a fundraiser they attended together this week. The comment instantly lit up social media, with some highlighting it as an example of the hurdles working women still face in the U.S. Obama was criticized earlier this year for bringing in a heavily male group of advisers for his second term, which started in January. A spokesman for Kamala Harris said she had a great conversation with Obama and strongly supports him but would not say whether she had accepted his apology. Obama apologized by telephone Thursday night, White House press secretary Jay Carney said. At a fundraiser in Silicon

Valley earlier that day, Obama raised eyebrows when he said Harris "happens to be, by far, the best-looking attorney general in the country. It's true! C'mon." He prefaced the remark by saying she is "brilliant and she is dedicated and she is tough, and she is exactly what you'd want in anybody who is administering the law." Harris was present at the fundraiser and addressed the crowd before the president spoke. Carney and Harris' spokesman, Gil Duran, both noted that Obama and Harris are longtime friends. "He called her to apologize for the distraction created by his comments," Carney told reporters Friday. "He did not want in any way to diminish the attorney general's professional accomplishments and her capabilities." He noted that Obama

also commented on Harris' smarts. Carney went on to say that Obama "fully recognizes the challenge women continue to face in the workplace and that they should not be judged based on appearance." In an emailed statement, Duran noted the long-standing ties between Obama and Harris. Duran later declined to say whether Harris had accepted the president's apology or whether she was offended by his comment. Harris had scheduled no public appearances Friday and was not expected to comment herself. Harris and Obama have campaigned for each other in prior elections. Some pundits have described her as a female version of Obama because of her stage presence and because, like the president, she is of mixed race. □

Venezuela's opposition candidate Capriles: Maduro won't last

**FABIOLA SANCHEZ
JAMES ANDERSON**
Associated Press

MARACAY, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuela's opposition presidential candidate says he'll cut off subsidized oil to Cuba, distance his country from nations that disrespect human rights and shore up the South American country's own troubled economy with the billions it now sends abroad to socialist friends. Henrique Capriles also told The Associated Press in an interview that he will seek better ties with Washington — always strained under the late President Hugo Chavez — but will demand respect from U.S. leaders, who he says have neglected Latin America. And the challenger predicted more tough times ahead for oil-rich Venezu-

ela if acting president and ruling party candidate Nicolas Maduro wins the April 14 election. He called Maduro incapable of governing this polarized nation and said its wealth of economic problems ultimate would force Maduro to resign or be forced out. "Whatever the outcome, I don't see how Nicolas Maduro has the capacity to stay for an extended time in government," Capriles asserted after staging a rock-star-like rally late Thursday in the central coast city of Maracay, traditionally a Chavista stronghold.

"He will have to resign, abandon (the presidency) if he's able to win," Capriles said. He did not elaborate on what would come, but in the back of many Venezuelans' minds is the un-

rest and violence that accompanied a brief 2002 coup against Chavez and a prolonged, opposition-led general strike against

state, is waging a desperate campaign to unseat Maduro, who was foreign minister and vice president to Chavez and became

to reassure voters he won't take away their state social programs while promising to address high crime, high inflation, nagging food shortages and recurring power outages.

Maduro's campaign strategy is to incessantly invoke Chavez, who tapped Maduro as his successor. He warns voters their social programs are at risk if Capriles wins, accuses foes of conspiring to destabilize the country and promotes his ties to an armed forces politicized by Chavez.

On Friday, Maduro met with high-ranking military commanders to alert them to alleged opposition plans to divide the officer corps. Capriles previously had announced he had spoken with commanders he didn't identify about possible Cabinet posts. On Thursday, he said he believed most of Venezuela's 200,000 soldiers don't support Defense Minister Diego Molero's public endorsement of Maduro, an endorsement that violated Venezuelan laws that mandate the military's impartiality. □



Opposition presidential candidate Henrique Capriles, center, raises his arms while greeting his supporters during a campaign rally in Maracay, Venezuela. Venezuela will hold a presidential election to replace late President Hugo Chavez on April 14. (AP Photo/Fernando Llano)

Chavez in 2003-2004. Capriles, governor of Venezuela's most populous

acting president before Chavez died March 5 of cancer. Capriles lost to Chavez in an October election, but again is cross-countrying the country to rally supporters.

The abbreviated campaign has been marked by personal insults as Capriles insists Maduro is no Chavez, still beloved by millions. Capriles has tried

Mujica caught on tape insulting Fernandez

MICHAEL WARREN
Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Argentines and Uruguayans had a great time joking about their leaders on Friday after Uruguayan President Jose Mujica was caught making insulting comments about his supposedly close friend and ally, Argentine President Cristina Fernandez.

Speaking in the riverside slang that citizens of both countries love to share, Mujica apparently didn't realize a microphone was on when he basically called Fernandez a "old shrew" who is "worse than her one-eyed" late husband, Nestor Kirchner. "The one-eyed guy had more political sense.

This one is just stubborn as a mule," he added, alluding to Kirchner's strabismus. As officials on both sides of

the border tried to contain the diplomatic fallout, their citizens reveled in the unscripted comments, joking on talk radio, creating web sites and cartoons, and adding thousands of comments on social networks. One person even put Mujica's words to a cumbia beat.

Mujica is a 77-year-old former leftist guerrilla and flower farmer noted for a cantankerous personality and for speaking off the cuff in ways that polished politicians never would. Fernandez, 60, a lawyer who became rich as a real estate investor, wears designer fashions and often rules by decree, treating other politicians either as friends or enemies.

The two reflect aspects of a cultural divide that has widened ever since the former Spanish colonies became independent nations in the

1820s, divided by the Rio de la Plata.

Argentines have grown accustomed to much rougher politics, while Uruguayans tend to seek consensus. □

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Putin urges peace talks to end the 'massacre' in Syria

V. ISACHENKOV
Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — President Vladimir Putin said the civil war in Syria has become "a massacre" that must be stopped through peace talks between the government and the opposition, and repeated Russia's firm rejection of calls for Syrian President Bashar Assad's ouster.

Speaking to the German ARD television in remarks released by the Kremlin on Friday, he rejected the Western criticism of Russia for continuing to supply weapons to Assad's regime. Putin said that such shipments don't violate international law, and he criticized those who send weapons to the Syrian opposition fighting a "legiti-

mate government." Russia has been Assad's main ally, shielding him from the U.N. sanctions over his crackdown on an uprising that turned into a civil war that has killed some 70,000 people. In recent months, it has sought to distance itself from the Syrian strongman and shown a resignation to him losing power. At the



Russian President Vladimir Putin listens to during an interview with the German ARD television in the Novo-Ogaryovo residence outside Moscow, Russia. On Friday, he rejected the Western criticism of Russia for continuing to supply weapons to Assad's regime. (AP Photo/Alexei Druzhinin)

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same time, it has refused to back calls for Assad to step down, insisting that the opposition should be persuaded to sit down for talks with the regime. "What is going on is a massacre, this is a disaster, a catastrophe," Putin said. "It has to be stopped." He added, however, that "when they say that Assad is fighting against his own people, we need to remember that this is the armed part of the opposition." Putin said that negotiations between the government and the opposition are necessary to provide guarantees to all parties and prevent the country from sliding into chaos. "We do not think that Assad should leave today, as our partners suggest. In this case, tomorrow we will have to decide what to do and where to

go," Putin said. He said that Russia doesn't want to see Syria plunge into a turmoil, which befell Libya, Iraq and Yemen. "Therefore, we believe that it is necessary to bring everyone to the negotiation table so that all warring parties could reach an agreement on how their interests will be protected and in which way they will participate in the future governance of the country," he said. "And then they will work together on the implementation of this plan with due guarantees of the international community." He said that French President Francois Hollande offered "some interesting ideas that can be implemented" on his February's visit to Moscow, but added that it will require some diplomatic work. □

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Pope demands decisive action against sex abuse

FRANCES D'EMILIO
Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis directed the Vatican on Friday to act decisively on clergy sex abuse cases and punish pedophile priests, saying the Catholic Church's "credibility" was on the line. The announcement was quickly dismissed by some victims' advocates as just more talk, while others lobbying for reform in the church held out hope the new pontiff might challenge the Vatican's bureaucratic culture seen as fostering a cover-up mentality. Clergy abuse victims called for swift and bold action from Francis as soon as he was elected pope last month. Yet in his homeland, Roman Catholic activists had characterized him as being slow to act against such abuse in his years heading the Argentine church. The Vatican's brief announcement about Francis' meeting Friday with the head of the Congre-

gation for the Doctrine of the Faith — the office that shapes and enforces policy on what to do about any abuse allegations and what happens to the abusers — depicted Francis as urging assertive action to

to protect minors, assistance for all those who in the past suffered such violence, necessary measures against the guilty," the statement said of Francis' meeting with Bishop Gerhard Ludwig Mueller.



Pope Francis kisses a child as he tours St. Peter's Square at the Vatican in his popemobile prior to his weekly general audience, Wednesday, April 3, 2013.

(AP Photo/Domenico Stinellis)

protect minors.

"The Holy Father in a special way urged that the Congregation, following the line sought by Benedict XVI, act decisively in sex abuse cases, above all promoting measures

The Vatican quoted Francis as saying abuse victims were always present "in his attention and in his prayers." It was the first announcement by the Vatican that Francis had made dealing with clergy

sex abuse a priority of his fledgling papacy, and the pontiff seemed to be putting Mueller on notice that he would tolerate no easing of the crackdown.

Francis's expressed intentions left some victims' advocates unimpressed.

"Once again, has have happened hundreds of times already, a top Catholic official says he's asking another top Catholic official to take action about pedophile priests and complicit bishops," said Barbara Dorris, an official of SNAP, the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, a U.S.-based organization.

"Big deal. Actions speak louder than words. And one of the first actions Pope Francis took was to visit perhaps the most high-profile corrupt prelate on the planet, Cardinal Bernard Law, who remains a powerful church official despite having been drummed out of Boston for hiding and enabling crimes by hundreds of child molesting clerics," Dorris said in a statement. Others were cautiously giving Francis the benefit of doubt — for now.

The church has "not done anything to remove bish-

ops and cardinals who covered up, or protected those who covered up" the abusers, said James Post, a professor at Boston University's School of Management who teaches corporate governance, accountability and ethics. "That's the bureaucratic defense that has to be broken. It's a huge challenge" for Francis, Post said in a telephone interview.

Post, who is also a founder of, and serves as an advisor to, Voice of the Faithful, a nationwide lay organization in the United States pushing for church reform, described the mandate to Mueller as "strongly symbolic" but one which should "be translated into forceful enforcement" of the policy.

This "may be a first step toward action and a test of whether the curia, the Vatican's notorious bureaucracy, will blunt the new pontiff's instruction," Post said. Some of those involved in protecting perpetrators "are almost certainly members of the curia," and it may well boil down to whether Francis has the skill and drive "to weed them out," Post said in a separate statement. □

Dutch banks' online services hit by denial-of-service cyberattack

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Dutch banks say a cyberattack has affected their online services,

but did not breach the security of customers' accounts.

The Netherlands Association of Banks says Dutch and some foreign banks were hit by a denial-of-service attack, in which huge amounts of data overwhelm servers — like hundreds of letters being

jammed through a mail slot at the same time.

The association did not say who was responsible for the attack Friday. In the Netherlands, the attack temporarily forced Internet and mobile banking sites of the ING bank offline and also affected online payments for other banks. The association stressed that bank customers could still get cash and pay bills at ATMs. □



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Japan PM's biggest test on economy still to come

ELAINE KURTENBACH

AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is about to find out that bending central bankers to his will was the easy part of jolting Japan's economy out of its two decade slump.

Since taking office late last year, Abe has sauntered from strength to strength, ticking off the boxes of his policy wish-list while enjoying popularity ratings several times those of his predecessors.

On Thursday, his Liberal Democratic Party claimed its biggest coup since its December parliamentary election win when the central bank surprised markets by overhauling its monetary policy, pledging to double the money supply to achieve a 2 percent inflation target within two years.

The central bank acted "as I had expected," Abe told parliament Friday. "This is truly bold monetary easing on a different level, sending a clear message to markets."

By joining the U.S. Federal Reserve and other major central banks in soaking the economy with money, the Bank of Japan hopes to get corporations and consumers to begin spend-

ing more and end a long malaise.

More aggressive monetary easing to end years of deflation is a mainstay of the "Abenomics" platform,

petitiveness of the world's third-largest economy.

Whatever deficit spending Japan dares to add to its record public debt already is in the pipeline.



A currency trader checks monitors at a foreign exchange company in Tokyo, Friday, April 5, 2013. Japan's benchmark stock index surged above 13,000 for the first time in more than four years Friday, its second straight day of big gains after the central bank announced aggressive action to lift the economy out of a prolonged slump.

(AP Photo/Koji Sasahara)

along with increased public spending to perk up demand and reforms to improve the long-term com-

Abe has also committed to rebalancing the budget. Now, attention is turning to the toughest part of

Abe's program: reforms to make aging Japanese industries and markets more competitive, loosen bottlenecks, and unleash pent-up dynamism and innovation.

Ever since its "Miracle Economy" bubble imploded over 20 years ago, Japan has failed to regain momentum despite lavish government spending and record low interest rates.

Abe says he is determined to push ahead with various reforms to make Japan's economy more modern and competitive. One of the biggest initiatives is Japan's commitment, announced last month, to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership, an Asia-Pacific-wide trading bloc meant to open markets wider to trade among its dozen or so members, which range from Chile and tiny Brunei to the U.S. and, if all goes well, Japan.

The trade pact could lend some heft to reform efforts aimed at deregulating and opening the economy. But much wider reforms are needed to cope with Japan's fast-aging and shrinking population, its energy crisis and soaring public debt.

"We need a clear road map. Unlike in the past, we

cannot keep things as they are," Norihiko Ishiguro, of the Economic and Industrial Policy Bureau at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, told a recent forum organized by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Ishiguro said Japan wants to capitalize on its competitive strengths in technology and services and foster more innovation and entrepreneurship.

However, apart from talk of speeding approvals for new pharmaceuticals and medical devices and expanding use of robots to help relieve a shortage of care workers, few details have emerged.

The reforms are "full of complicated issues," said Adachi. "Even if you succeed in some areas or all areas, there is no guarantee the economy will get better. Certainly the impact will not come in a short time," he said.

A similar set of reforms in Germany, launched in 2000, took a decade to bear results, said Grimes.

Japan needed these changes years earlier, he said. "We may be moving into the range where the opportunities have passed for having a really big impact." □

Paris hires sheep to mow the lawn at city's gardens

THOMAS ADAMSON

Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Will tourists soon see flocks of baaing sheep at the Eiffel Tower and bleating ewes by Notre Dame cathedral?

That could be the case, since Paris City Hall this week installed a small flock of sheep to mow the lawn at the city's gardens, replacing gas-guzzling lawnmowers.

Four woolly ewes — shipped in from an island off the Brittany coast — are currently munching the grass surrounding Paris Archives building. The number of sites doing that could expand from October in and around Paris.

The ovine-operation follows

a successful stint last year by two goats that were hired privately by the Louvre to mow the lawn at Tuileries, central Paris' grand 17th-century gardens.

Motorless and independent, the four-legged workers contentedly munch day and night — oblivious of the France's strict 35-hour work week.

A similar experiment in a park outside Paris even found that sheep droppings were a benefit, bringing swallows back to the area.

"It might sound funny, but animal lawnmowers are ecological as no gasoline is required, and cost half the price of a machine," said Marcel Collet, Paris farm

director. "And they're so cute."

Paris City Hall, meanwhile, has big ambitions for its sheep. "I can imagine this very easily in London and New York ... even Tokyo," said Fabienne Giboudeaux, Paris City Hall's director of Green Spaces.

"And why not have them at the Eiffel Tower?"

The City Hall initiative was inspired by a handful of private French companies that have been hiring sheep and goat lawnmowers for quite some time.

Alain Divo is the director of one such company, Eco-terra, whose goats worked at the Tuileries last summer. He said having animal lawnmowers is great for

biodiversity.

"We installed some at the Parc des Sceaux (a famous park outside Paris), where the swallow population had completely disappeared.

Because the droppings attract small insects, the swallows all came back in two years," he said.

Parisians who cringe at the sight of poop may worry that sheep droppings could ruin their pristine City of Light.

But Divo said goat and sheep poop crumbles away in days to an odorless, inoffensive powder that serves as potent fertilizer for the grass.

Another company known as Ecomouton, (Ecosheep

in English), currently has 260 sheep working the premises of top companies such as Gaz de France. Ecomouton plans to expand that number to more than 600 sheep by the end of 2013.

Its director, Sylvain Girard, said he's surprised by the initiative's success, with interest coming in from countries such as the Britain, Germany, Belgium and Russia. He's said the idea came to him by chance.

"I have a company myself with lawn, and I was always running about after the guy who was meant to mow the lawn. One day I just thought: 'What if I just put in sheep?'" said Girard. "It was a bit of a wacky idea, but it worked." □



Divi Resorts' Easter Scavenger Hunt a huge success!



ORANJESTAD - The Human Resources Department organized a wonderful Easter Scavenger Hunt for its employees of the different Divi Resorts: Divi, Tamarijn, Divi/Dutch Village, Divi Phoenix, Phoenix Sales and D.A.S.C. on March 22nd.

A total of 11 teams participated: Skittles, Ban Perde, Blue's Clues, The Bunnies, The Naughty Bunnies, White Angels, The Black Ops, The Bee Honeys, The Candy Creatures, The Pink Panthers and Pink Power.

The winning team was SKITTLES (Phoenix Front Office Department) with a total of 100.5 points!

Congratulations to the winning team and a special thanks to Sharissa Figueroa and her team for putting the scavenger hunt together! □



Tonight at Palm Beach Plaza:

Wine, Women & Fashion: Ladies Night, and the boys can join!

PALM BEACH - Palm Beach Plaza Mall is announcing Wine, Women & Fashion. It's a new, unique and fun event especially for women, where the ladies come and meet each other and have a delightful time, enjoying a movie, shopping, dining, fashion shows and prizes.

The VIP Movie will start off with a Welcome Drink at the Caribbean Cinemas located at Palm Beach Plaza Mall. Here is where you'll find different stands with different merchandises on special price. With your

purchase you will receive a raffle ticket. At the theatre room entrance you'll receive a cupcake and popcorn. All the participants will receive a GOODY BAG which will consist of different gifts, special discounts, and VIP Card. The raffle winner will be announced before the movie starts. After the movie you can go to the VIP area located on the second floor, there will be a private bar and a perfect view for the Fashion Shows.

There will be a total of 4 Fashion Shows of the lat-



est trends available at the store(s) located in Palm Beach Plaza Mall, starting from 6PM to 9.30PM

Wine Women & Fashion is a monthly event, once per month. With your participation in the VIP Movie you will receive a VIP Movie Card.

The Gentlemen can also enjoy the Wine, Women & Fashion. Palm Beach Plaza has created a guys corner

located on the 3rd floor. You can shoot some pool, watch a game which will be transmitted through a projector screen, and of course special price on Beer!

The Wine, Women & Fashion is on the 6th of April 2013, starting from 5PM to 10PM

Shops are open from 10AM-10PM; Kids day care: Palm Beach Dream Bowl ☐

Newly founded Dyslexia Foundation gets amazing response from parents

The president and board members of the newly founded 'Fundacion pro Persona cu Dislexia' were stunned with the great turn-out of parents for their first 'inaugural' meeting, which was held at the Centro di Barrio Playa Pabao on March 27. Ramon Todd Dandere, Vanessa Tromp and Esmeralda Ophelia Schotman had hopefully copied papers with information about dyslexia for thirty persons, but more than fifty interested parents, grandparents and children showed up. Studies show that dyslexia is much wider-spread than previously thought: one in ten children struggle with it. Aruba is no different than elsewhere in the world. Dyslexia has many characteristics, but one common factor: the person feels distraught with his or her inability to read or spell words. The person feels inadequate and stu-

pid, while there is nothing wrong with his or her intelligence. The sooner the disease is discovered, the better, as there is much to be done about it at an early age. Dyslexia detection often comes late when the child speaks another mother language than the language taught in school: the problem is not recognized as such. Therefore there should be more emphasis on early detection in elementary schools and there also should be more support available so that children with dyslexia receive additional and specific tuition which targets the problems. For parents who have missed the opportunity to attend the dyslexia foundation's first meeting, please send a mail to fundacionpropersonacudislexia@gmail.com so that you will be included in the foundation's next meetings and/or projects. ☐

Beauty On The Beach

Jennifer Boling

She is from Columbus Ohio, it is her first time in Aruba, she is on vacation with some friends.



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Affected passenger flow at the airport:

Challenging passenger processes for flights departing to the US

- Sequestration also affects Aeropuerto Internacional Reina Beatrix

ORANJESTAD: Aruba Airport Authority N.V. (AAA) is currently dealing with an external situation that is possibly affecting the passenger flow departing to the US, as is the case in the US also.

In the US travelers had been warned ever since the beginning of March 2013 about long lines and passenger processes at the US airports as a possible effect of the US Budget sequestration.

Budget sequestration is a procedure in United States law that limits the size of the federal budget. Sequestration involves setting a hard cap on the amount of government spending within broadly-defined categories. For Aruba this means that as of March 1,

2013 the US Customs and Border Protection who operates and manages the USPre-Clearance facility at the Aruba airport, has also been feeling the effects of these caps on the amount of government spending which may have its effect on their manpower planning.

The Aruba Airport Authority N.V. and all other local and US authorities and companies involved in the US bound passenger process such as IASA, Local Customs, airlines and ground handlers are continuously working together to try to counteract the situation at hand,

but the effects are nonetheless visible during peak hours at the airport, especially from Fridays to Sundays when departing in the afternoon.

AAA advises passengers departing to the US to be



at the airport at least 4 hours prior to the sched-

uled departure time of their flight at the airport, in order

to ensure a timely boarding process. □

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Williams sisters win their way into semifinals



Venus Williams is all smiles after defeating Madison Keys 6-4, 6-4 at the Family Circle Cup tennis tournament in Charleston, S.C., Friday, April 5, 2013.

Associated Press

PETE IACOBELLI
AP Sports Writer

CHARLESTON, South Carolina (AP) — Top-ranked Serena Williams ended a long and successful day for the Williams family as she and sister Venus both won twice Friday to reach the Family Circle Cup semifinals and set up their first sibling showdown since 2009. Serena won her 13th straight match by defeating sixth-seeded Lucie Safarova 6-4, 6-1. Earlier, she topped two-time NCAA doubles champ Mallory Burdette in a third-round match moved due to Thursday's 7 1/2-hour rain delay. Venus also had double duty, rallying past Varvara Lepchenko in three sets before ousting 18-year-old Madison Keys later on Billie Jean King Court. The Williams sisters next go for a spot in the finals Saturday. They haven't met in a tournament since the 2009 Tour Championships in Qatar. Serena holds a 13-10 lead, although they're 1-1 on clay.

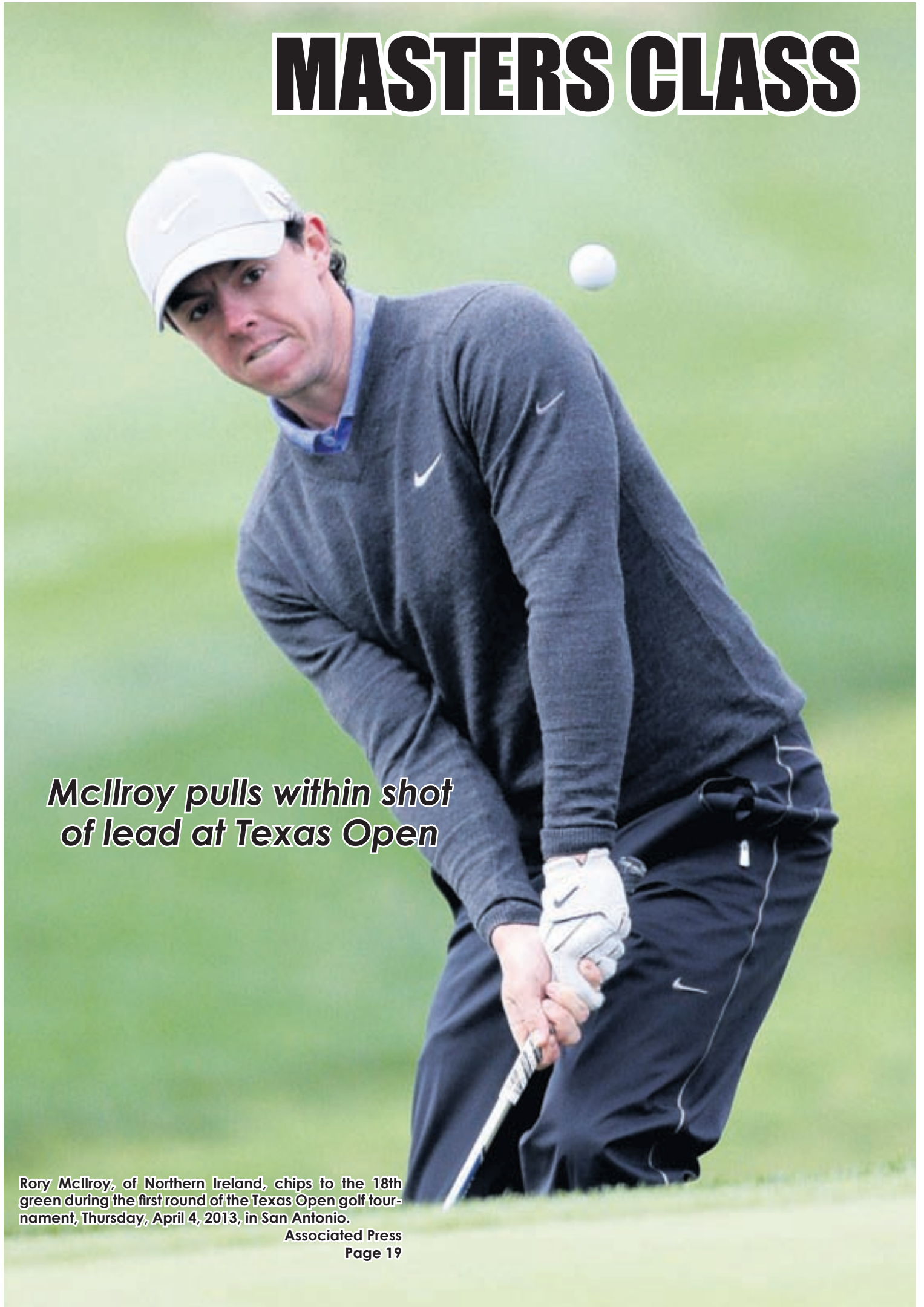
Continued on Page 18

MASTERS CLASS

McIlroy pulls within shot of lead at Texas Open

Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, chips to the 18th green during the first round of the Texas Open golf tournament, Thursday, April 4, 2013, in San Antonio.

Associated Press
Page 19



Williams

Continued from Page 17

Jelena Jankovic, the 2007 champion here, defeated Eugenie Bouchard 6-2, 6-1 to make the semifinals. Jankovic will take on either second-seeded Caroline Wozniacki or Stefanie Voegele in a quarterfinal match that takes place Friday night.

The sisters were put in the unusual spot of doubling up when a 7 1/2-hour rain delay postponed much of Thursday's schedule.

Venus Williams looked her most comfortable of the week against the power-hitting Keys. Williams had needed a third set to pull out both her previous matches and it looked like it might happen again when Keys was a point away from moving in front 4-1 in the second set.

But Williams was able to rally to win five of the final six games, securing her second semifinal berth in four tournaments this year.

Venus Williams seemed to have her first match under control, ahead 6-2 and

the middle of the second set and took a 1-0 lead in the decisive set. That's

Venus Williams returned to clay-court action at the 2012 Family Circle af-

Syndrome kept her from the game for almost six months between the 2011 U.S. Open and the 2012 Sony Open.

She reached the quarterfinals here a year ago, falling to Samantha Stosur to prevent an all-Williams semi that time.

Burdette held her own against Serena Williams, the world's No. 1 player, and was tied at 4-all in the opening set. Burdette had a chance to get to 5-all a few moments later, but Williams won the next three points to close out the set. Williams screamed loudly and pumped her fist after taking the set.

Williams broke out again when the second set was tied at 2, winning the final four games.

Burdette was proud of her effort against Serena Williams.

"I don't think you ever walk out on the court and say I'm going to beat Serena today," she said. "You just go out there and do your best." □



Serena Williams returns to Mallory Burdette at the Family Circle Cup tennis tournament in Charleston, S.C., Friday, April 5, 2013.

3-0 in the second set. Lapchenko rallied to win seven of the next eight games while a chilly drizzle fell in

when Williams again found her game and pulled away by winning six of the final seven games.

Associated Press
ter an absence of about two years on the surface. A bout with the autoimmune disease Sjogren's

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McIlroy within 3 shots of lead at Texas Open



Billy Horschel, of Jacksonville Beach, Fla., acknowledges the gallery after he made birdie on the 17th hole during the second round of the Texas Open golf tournament, Friday, April 5, 2013, in San Antonio. Associated Press

KURT VOIGT
AP Sports Writer

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Rory McIlroy matched the low round of the day with a 5-under par 67 and moved within three shots of the lead at the Texas Open on Friday, continuing his surge toward next week's Masters. The world's No. 2 golfer, who decided to play in the tournament late last week, had seven birdies — including his final three holes — and overcame a bogey

on No. 9 after driving into the rough and catching his left shin on a cactus. McIlroy is three shots behind leader Billy Horschel, who birdied his last two holes to post his second straight 4-under 68. Three players are two shots back at 6 under. Thursday's co-leaders, Matt Bettencourt and Peter Tomasulo, each shot 1-over 73s and fell four shots off the lead. Bettencourt went as low as 8 under in the surprisingly

calm Texas weather on Friday morning before falling back after a stretch of three bogeys in four holes once the wind picked up. Summerhays also reached as low as 7 under before falling back with a bogey on No. 9, but it was Horschel who separated himself with his late flurry. Horschel jumped from 60th to 24th on the money list after a second-place finish at last week's Houston Open. He closed out Thursday's round with a birdie, and he one-upped that on Friday — closing with a pair of 11-foot birdie putts on No. 17 and 18 to vault into first. He needed 28 putts on Friday after taking only 25 a day earlier, but Horschel hit 11 of 14 fairways after hit-

ting only seven a day earlier. Horschel has made the cut in all nine of the events he's entered this year, extending his tour-best streak to 21 in a row, but he has yet to win a PGA Tour event. Now he faces a leaderboard filled with winning experienced players behind him, including four players — McIlroy, Jim Furyk, Retief Goosen and Lee Janzen — who have combined to win seven majors. McIlroy is the most recent major winner of the pursuers, having won the PGA Championship last August. However, he's struggled for much of this year following an equipment change and recently lost his No. 1 ranking to Tiger Woods.

McIlroy has just one top 10 finish this year, and he decided late last week to add the San Antonio stop to his schedule to add competitive rounds prior to next week's opening major of the year. It's a move that appeared questionable after an up-and-down even-par 72 on Thursday, but not anymore after Friday's scoring binge. McIlroy still had difficulties with his driving, hitting only 9 of 14 fairways, but he made lengthy birdie putts on each of his final three holes — including a 26-foot strike on the par-3 16th. He narrowly missed a 24-foot eagle putt in front of a surging gallery on the 18th after reaching the par 5 in two shots. □

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Wood dominates as Cubs drop Pirates 3-2

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — PITTSBURGH (AP) — Travis Wood allowed one hit over six innings as the Chicago Cubs held off the Pittsburgh Pirates 3-2 in the National League on Thursday.

NL Capsules Wood struck out four and walked two as the Cubs won a season-opening series for the first time in four years. Wood also scored the game's first run, racing home on Starlin Castro's single in the third inning. Nate Schierholtz smacked a two-run homer in the ninth to give the Cubs some breathing room.

Chicago needed it after another shaky outing from Carlos Marmol.

The closer picked up his first save of the season, but only after the Pirates drew within one.

Pittsburgh had the tying run on third with no outs, but Pedro Alvarez struck out and Neil Walker hit into a game-ending double play.

PADRES 2, METS 1

NEW YORK (AP) — Jedd Gyorko doubled in the go-ahead run in the fourth



Chicago Cubs right fielder Nate Schierholtz dives for a fly ball hit by Pittsburgh Pirates' Neil Walker to end the second inning of a baseball game in Pittsburgh, Thursday, April 4, 2013.

Associated Press

inning for his first major league RBI as the San Diego Padres beat the New York Mets for their first win of the season.

Eric Stults (1-0) and five relievers combined on a five-hitter and struck out 14 for the Padres, who had not led in their first two games. Stults, who beat the Mets seven years ago for the Los

Angeles Dodgers for his first Major League win, made an opening-day roster for the first time.

Mets starter Dillon Gee (0-1) returned from shoulder surgery last summer and was nearly as sharp. He opened with a walk, then retired 10 in a row and wound up giving up three hits in 6 1-3 innings.

NATIONALS 6, MARLINS 1

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jordan Zimmermann worked around eight hits over six innings and Ryan Zimmerman had three hits, including a two-run double, as the Washington Nationals completed a season-opening three-game sweep of the Miami Marlins.

Jayson Werth tacked on a three-run homer in the seventh, and Bryce Harper had another eventful day, collecting two hits, taking an elbow to the face while scoring a run, and getting thrown out trying to steal third.

The defending National League East champion Nationals outscored the Marlins 11-1 in the series. At least Miami finally got someone home, ending a 19-inning run drought in the second Thursday on Justin Ruggiano's homer to right off Zimmermann (1-0).

Wade LeBlanc (0-1) took the loss.

PHILLIES 2, BRAVES 0

ATLANTA (AP) — Cliff Lee allowed two hits in eight scoreless innings and the Philadelphia Phillies scored twice in the second inning to win their first game of the season.

Lee (1-0) didn't win his first game last year until July 4, but the former Cy Young Award winner outpitched Kris Medlen (0-1) in chilly temperatures.

Philadelphia scored two runs in the second on Ben Revere's fielder's choice RBI and Chase Utley's sacrifice fly RBI.

After Lee watched Cole Hamels and Roy Halladay lose the first two games by a combined 16-7 score, the left-hander walked none and struck out eight in 106 pitches to give the Phillies' renowned three-some a big lift.

Lee left for pinch-hitter Freddy Galvis in the ninth. Jonathan Papelbon earned his first save.

INTERLEAGUE

REDS 5, ANGELS 4

CINCINNATI (AP) — Shin-Soo Choo homered on Joe Blanton's first pitch of the game, the first of Cincinnati's three homers off the right-hander, as the Reds pulled away to beat the Angels.

In other NL games it was Chicago Cubs 3, Pittsburgh 2; Cincinnati 5, L.A. Angels 4; San Diego 2, N.Y. Mets 1; Washington 6, Miami 1; and Philadelphia 2, Atlanta 0.

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Yankees get first win of season, beating Red Sox

The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — NEW YORK (AP) — Andy Pettitte

pitched the Yankees to their first win of the season and Mariano Rivera made a successful return to the mound in New York's 4-2 victory over the Boston Red Sox on Thursday.

Brett Gardner and Francisco Cervelli homered for the Yankees, providing some unexpected power to a depleted lineup missing the "sore four" — Derek Jeter, Alex Rodriguez, Mark Teixeira and Curtis Granderson. All those Major League All-Stars are on the disabled list, and without them New York dropped its first two games at home to the rival Red Sox.

Lyle Overbay had a two-run single off Ryan Dempster (0-1), who struck out eight in his Boston debut but needed 101 pitches to get through five innings.

Pettitte (1-0) tossed eight sharp innings on a chilly night and Rivera entered to a standing ovation. Major League baseball's career saves leader, set to retire after this season, missed most of last year after tearing a knee ligament May 3 during batting practice in Kansas City.

ORIOLES 6, RAYS 3

ST. PETERSBURG, Florida (AP) — Chris Davis homered for the third straight day and drove in four runs Thursday to lead the Baltimore Orioles past the Tampa Bay Rays.

Davis went 7 of 11 with three homers, three doubles and a Major League-leading 11 RBIs in helping the Orioles win two of three games in the season-opening series.

He drove in four for the second day in a row, hitting a two-run homer in the second inning and a two-run double that broke a 2-2 tie against Roberto Hernandez (0-1) in the sixth.

Adam Jones had three more hits, giving him seven in a series that saw the three-four-five spots in Baltimore's lineup go 17 for 37 with four homers, six doubles, 13 runs scored and 15 RBIs.

Miguel Gonzalez (1-0) allowed two runs and four hits over 6 1/3 innings.

TWINS 8, TIGERS 2

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Mike Pelfrey pitched into the sixth inning in his Minnesota debut and Josh Willingham and Trevor Plouffe hit home runs as the Twins took the season-opening series from the Detroit Tigers.

Pelfrey (1-0) wasn't charged with any earned runs, taking the mound less than a year after Tommy John surgery. He was given a 3-2 lead when Willingham and Plouffe went deep against Tigers starter Rick Porcello (0-1).

Four relievers kept the Twins in front for four innings, until they broke the game open with a five-run eighth against Brayan Villarreal. The Tigers' relievers gave up 10 runs over 10 innings in three games against the Twins.

Miguel Cabrera got another RBI, his fourth of the year, but the Tigers had another quiet afternoon at the plate.

ROYALS 3, WHITE SOX 1

CHICAGO (AP) — Jeremy Guthrie struck out nine and gave up one run in six innings as the Kansas City

Royals ended a two-game losing streak to start the season, beating the Chicago White Sox.

Guthrie (1-0) scattered five hits and walked one for Kansas City, which took its first lead of the season with three runs in the fifth inning and made it stick. Kansas City reliever Greg Holland worked the ninth for his first save.

Chicago right-hander Gavin Floyd (0-1) gave up four hits and two runs in six innings. He walked one and struck out five.

Gordon Beckham was 4 for 4 for Chicago, matching a career high set on May 12, 2012, at Minnesota.

ATHLETICS 8, MARINERS 2
OAKLAND, California (AP) — Josh Reddick and Yoenis Cespedes gave Brandon Maurer a rude welcome to the Major League by hitting two-run homers off the Seattle rookie that led the Oakland Athletics past the Mariners.

A.J. Griffin (1-0) allowed two runs in six innings and John Jaso drove in a run against his former team as the Athletics won back-to-back games to earn a split of the season-opening series.


Michael Morse homered for the third straight day and joined Ken Griffey Jr. in 1997 as the only Mariners to homer four times in the first four games. **BLUE JAYS 10, INDIANS 8**

TORONTO (AP) — J.P. Arenibia hit two solo homers and Edwin Encarnacion added a three-run shot as the Toronto Blue Jays beat the Cleveland Indians, avoiding their first 0-3 start since 2004. □



New York Yankees catcher Francisco Cervelli, left, puts his arm around Yankees relief pitcher Mariano Rivera after Rivera earned the save in their 4-2 victory over the Boston Red Sox in a baseball game at Yankee Stadium in New York, Thursday, April 4, 2013.

Associated Press



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Study:

Rural hospitals in decline a growing national concern

RURAL-HOSPITALS-HNS JORDAN RAU

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WASHINGTON — For 15 years, Congress has bestowed special privileges on some small remote hospitals, usually in rural areas, to help them stay afloat. Medicare pays them more than it pays most hospitals and exempts them from financial pressure to operate efficiently and requirements to reveal how their patients fare. Nearly one in four hospitals qualifies for the program. Despite these benefits, there's new evidence that the quality of many of these hospitals may be deteriorating. A study published this week found that during the past decade the death rates of patients at these critical access hospitals were growing while mortality rates at other hospitals were dropping.

"This carved-out group of hospitals seems to be falling further and further behind," said the paper's lead author, Dr. Karen Joynt of the Harvard School of Public Health.

The study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, found that in 2002, mortality rates at critical access hospitals for Medicare patients with heart attacks, heart failure and pneumonia were about the same as at other hospitals. But they have diverged since then.

While death rates at other hospitals dropped by 0.2 percent a year, reaching 11.4 percent in 2010, mortality rates at critical access hospital death rates rose about 0.1 percent each year, reaching 13.3 percent in 2010. Critical access hospitals also did worse than other small, rural hospitals that were not in the program. The paper said all these results were statistically significant.

Joynt and her co-authors, John Orav and Dr. Ashish Jha, also of Harvard, suggested that the hospitals' care may suffer because

they don't have the latest sophisticated technology or specialists to treat the increasingly elderly and frail rural populations. A previous paper by the trio found

harder for rural hospital to keep up," Joynt said. "It's hard to provide care for really, really sick patients in a resource-limited setting." She also suggested that



The 25-bed Stewart-Webster Hospital in Richland, Georgia, closed its doors recently after a steady deterioration in quality, partly because high unemployment in the area led to more people not paying for services.

(Handout Photo)

that critical access hospitals were less likely to have the ability to perform cardiac catheterizations and to have intensive care units.

"As we have more advanced treatments, it's

the hospitals may have been victims of their lenient treatment by the government. Since hospital officials are not required to evaluate their performances to make reports

to Medicare, the government may not realize that facilities could need additional assistance in caring for sicker patients. "This is 1,000 hospitals, a quarter of the hospitals in the country, that are invisible," she said. "We've created a completely separate system, and in this case it looks like that has not done patients in these hospitals any favors." In the study released this week, Joynt and her colleagues examined that objection, but they determined that although some critical access hospitals had improved, overall the group had done worse compared with others. Tuesday's study is the result of that research.

An accompanying editorial by Dr. John Ioannidis, a medical professor at Stanford, called the paper "the best study to date" on the issue, though he said the paper might not have captured all the potential reasons for the dis-

crepancy in death rates. He also questioned whether policymakers should enact broad changes on critical access hospitals. "Trying to impose quality data collection and reporting in such hospitals that have already strained resources may actually do more harm than good," Ioannidis wrote. "Even for non-CAHs, the evidence is tenuous that performance and quality initiatives do work." Joynt said that her research, while not conclusive, indicated that the hospitals might need additional help. For instance, she said, through telemedicine, larger hospitals could offer the advice of their specialists to rural hospitals confronting complex cases. In addition, there might be better ways to transfer those patients to more advanced hospitals, she said. "I see this as more of a systems problem than just a hospital problem," Joynt said. □

Ask Doctor Bone

Dr. Melanie Bone
© 2013 Cox Newspapers

Q: It used to be that when I went to my doctors' office the nurse checked my breasts manually and then sent me for an ultrasound and digital mammogram. Now they have a sonogram machine in the office, and she does it and then sends me for a mammogram someplace else. At a health fair I was told that it is absolutely necessary to have the breasts checked manually and that the ultrasound and digital mammogram were not enough. What is your opinion?

-- E.L., West Palm Beach, Fla.

A: Clinical breast exam (CBE) is a controversial part of screening for breast cancer. CBE was the only option before mammogram and sonogram were invented, and is still the main approach to screen-

ing for breast cancer in many parts of the world (e.g., rural areas and underdeveloped nations). The question is whether CBE increases the chance of finding breast cancer without leading to a lot of false positive "scares" about breast masses. A number of studies have looked at these questions. Unfortunately, they didn't all come up with the same answers.

They did agree that mammogram remains the mainstay of screening for breast cancer with a sensitivity (true positive rate) of about 85 percent. This means that about 85 percent of women with breast cancer are correctly identified by mammogram. The sensitivity of CBE is much lower, less than 50 percent in some studies, and is different depending on whether the woman is complaining of a breast mass or is just being examined without a complaint.

Also, the mammogram can detect a highly suspicious mass based on its imaging characteristics (presence of calcium, spiculation, etc.) whereas CBE has a poor predictive value because few masses palpated by an examiner can be accurately diagnosed as cancer without a confirmatory scan. Most masses found by CBE are benign. CBE is helpful in very specific circumstances. It helps in young women with dense breasts where a mammogram might be harder to read, and it is better than not doing anything when mammogram and/or sonogram is unavailable. The strongest study indicated that it helped increase the cancer detection rate by about 4 percent in some groups of patients.

I continue to do a breast exam as part of an annual well exam or if the patient has a complaint. The challenge is deciding who to refer for further evaluation, because not every mass needs referral, but referring appropriately can save

lives. That is the art of medicine and no statistics will convince me otherwise.

Q: I am a radiologist and wish to compliment you on your content and writing style. Would you please discuss how important it is for smokers, both former and current, to have regular spiral CT scans of their lungs? Too many cancers are missed on plain chest X-ray.

-- Keep well, Dr. B.B.

A: Thank you for the feedback. There is no doubt that low-dose spiral (helical) computed tomography (CT) is far more effective than a plain chest X-ray in finding asymptomatic lung cancers in high-risk patients. A recent study showed a 20 percent reduction in cancer-related death in patients having regular CT screenings. Unfortunately, the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force did not feel there was sufficient evidence to recommend for or against this type of screening. □



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Facebook barges into Google turf with Home

PETER SVENSSON

AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Facebook Home, the new application that takes over the front screen of a smartphone, is a bit of a corporate home invasion. Facebook is essentially moving into Google's turf, taking advantage of software the search giant and competitor created.

Facebook Home will operate on phones running Google Inc.'s Android software and present Facebook status updates, messages and other content on the home screen, rather than making the user fire up Facebook's app. The software will be available for users to download on April 12 and will come preloaded on a new phone from HTC Corp., sold by AT&T Inc. in the U.S.

Google gives away Android, the most popular smartphone software in the world, in the hope that it will steer phone users toward Google services, such as Maps and Gmail, and the ads it sells. Compared to ads targeting PC surfers, mobile ads are a small market, but it's growing quickly. Research firm eMarketer expects



Cell phones with the a new Facebook interface are displayed at the company's headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif., Thursday, April 4, 2013.

Associated Press

U.S. mobile ad spending to grow 77 percent this year to \$7.29 billion.

With Home, Facebook is inserting itself between users and Google, diverting them to the social network's own ads and services. It's taking advantage of the fact that Google places few restrictions on how phone manufacturers and software developers modify Android. By contrast, Facebook Home would not work on the iPhone without approval from Apple Inc., and close collaboration with the company.

"Facebook Home can only reside on Android because

only Google was daft enough to allow it," said independent phone analyst Horace Dediu, via Twitter.

At the launch event Thursday, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said Google was aware of the project, but Facebook didn't work them to create Home. Asked if he believed Google could change tactics and restrict apps like Home, he said it was theoretically possible, but highly unlikely for Google to do a "180-degree change" in its stance on Android's openness.

It's not the first time a big Internet company has co-

opted Android: Amazon.com has gone much farther with its Kindle Fire tablets.

They run a version of Android that strips out all Google services, replacing them with Amazon's equivalents. Barnes & Noble Inc. does the same thing with its Nook tablets. These devices lie outside the Google system, whereas phones running Facebook Home still come with Google apps like Maps and the Play Store for music, movies and applications.

The Play Store has many examples of downloadable applications that modify the Android home screen — so-called "launchers." Home, however, represents

the first time a major Internet company and Google competitor has created a downloadable launcher.

J.P. Morgan analyst Doug Anmuth said Home may increase the pressure on Google to find ways to get people to spend more time on its Plus social network, which so far hasn't been as magnetic as Facebook's hangout.

Anmuth also thinks the communication tools built into Home could decrease usage of Google's Gmail and Gchat services.

But Zuckerberg said the app will help Google.

"I think this is really good for Android," he told the audience at the launch event in Menlo Park, California. □

Dutch banks' online services hit by cyberattack

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Dutch banks say a cyberattack has affected their online services, but did not breach the security of customers' accounts.

The Netherlands Association of Banks says Dutch and some foreign banks

were hit by a denial-of-service attack, in which huge amounts of data overwhelm servers — like hundreds of letters being jammed through a mail slot at the same time.

The association did not say who was responsible for the attack Friday.

In the Netherlands, the attack temporarily forced Internet and mobile banking sites of the ING bank offline and also affected online payments for other banks. The association stressed that bank customers could still get cash and pay bills at ATMs. □



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Stocks end lower as data indicates slowing recovery

STEVE ROTHWELL
AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks fell on Wall Street Friday after the government reported that U.S. employers added the fewest jobs in nine months in March and more people gave up looking for work.

The Dow Jones industrial average ended 40.86 points lower at 14,565.25, a loss of 0.3 percent. The index was down as much as 171 points in the early going. It rose gradually throughout the day to reclaim much of its early loss. U.S. employers added just 88,000 jobs in March, according to the Labor Department's monthly survey. That's half the pace of the previous six months. The report was far worse than economists had forecast and a disappointment for investors following positive signs on housing and the job market over the winter. The survey, one of the most closely watched indicators of the economy, dented investors' confidence that the U.S. was poised for a sustained recovery. The stock market has surged this year, pushing the Dow to another record high close on Tuesday. The index is still up 11.2 percent this year.

"Things are still looking decent, but there's no doubt that this was a bit of a disappointment," said Brad Sorensen, Charles Schwab's director of market and sector research. "We're watching to see: is this the start of another soft patch?"

In other trading, the Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 6.70 points, or 0.4 percent, to 1,553.28. The index logged its worst week of year, falling 1 percent. Technology stocks fell the most of the 10 industry groups in the index, dropping 1 percent. Among big decliners in tech stocks, Cisco Systems fell 43 cents, or 2 percent, to \$20.61. Oracle dropped 34 cents, or 1 percent, to \$32.03.

Investors were reducing their exposure to risk. The utilities and telecommunications industries bucked the downward trend in the

market. Both rose 0.4 percent. The rich dividends and stable earnings provided by those companies make them attractive to

investors who want to play it safe.

Natural gas companies were among the best performers on the S&P 500 as

the price of the fuel rose 4.5 percent on concerns about supplies. The price of the fuel has risen 21 percent since the start of the year. Cabot Oil & Gas climbed \$3.32, or 5.1 percent, to \$67.96 and WPX Energy gained 80 cents, or 5.2 percent, to \$16.15.

Stocks pared their early losses as some investors inferred that slowing U.S. growth meant that the Federal Reserve would stick to its stimulus program. The central bank is buying \$85 billion dollars in bonds every month as part of an effort to revive the economy. Its actions have been a big factor pushing the stock market higher this year.

Quincy Krosby, a market strategist at Prudential Financial, said the slowdown in hiring made it more likely that the Fed would continue with its easy-money policy, which includes keeping interest rates at historically low levels.

Investors will shift their focus to earnings reports next week.

Alcoa, the first company in the Dow index to report earnings, will release its first-quarter financial results after the markets close Monday. Analysts expect profits for S&P 500 companies to rise 0.6 percent in the first quarter compared with the same period a year earlier, according to S&P Capital IQ. □



A trader works on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange in New York. Stocks fell on Wall Street Friday as disappointing data suggested a weak spring for the U.S. economic recovery.

(AP Photo/Seth Wenig)

US adds 88,000 jobs, unemployment falls to 7.6%

C. S. RUGABER
PAUL WISEMAN

AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. employers added just 88,000 jobs in March, the fewest in nine months and a sharp retreat after a period of strong hiring. The slowdown may signal that the economy is heading into a weak spring.

The Labor Department said Friday that the unemployment rate dipped to 7.6 percent, the lowest in four years, from 7.7 percent. But the rate fell only because more discouraged Americans stopped looking for work. People who are out of work are no longer counted as unemployed once they stop looking for a job.

The percentage of Americans working or looking for jobs fell to 63.3 percent in March, the lowest such figure in nearly 34 years.

Stocks plummeted after the report. The Dow Jones industrial average dropped more than 1 percent in morning trading. Broader indexes also declined.

"This is not a good report through and through," Dan Greenhaus, chief economic strategist at brokerage firm BTIG, said in a note to clients.

March's job gains were less than half the average of the previous six months,

when the economy added an average of 196,000 jobs a month. The government said hiring was even stronger in January and February than previously estimated. January's job growth was revised up from 119,000 to 148,000.

economy isn't growing fast enough to generate many jobs. He expects the economy to grow around 2 percent this year, a sluggish pace. It would be growing faster, perhaps at a 3 percent annual rate, if not for the Social Security tax



A help wanted sign is posted in front of a restaurant in Richmond, Va. The U.S. economy has enjoyed a four-month stretch of robust job gains, and on Friday, April 5, 2013, the government will signal whether that trend endured into March. U.S. employers added just 88,000 jobs in March, the fewest in nine months and a sharp retreat after a period of strong hiring. The slowdown is a reminder that the job market's path back to health will be uneven.

(AP Photo/Steve Helber)

February's was revised from 236,000 to 268,000.

Several industries cut back sharply on hiring in March. Retailers cut 24,000 jobs after averaging 32,000 in the previous three months. Manufacturers cut 3,000 jobs after adding 19,000 the previous month. Financial services shed 2,000.

Craig Alexander, chief economist with TD Bank Financial Group, says the

increase and the federal budget cuts.

"Fiscal austerity is having an impact," Alexander said.

Some economists said retailers might have held back on hiring because March was colder than normal. That likely meant Americans bought fewer spring clothes and bought less garden equipment. Clothing stores shed 15,000

jobs and building material and garden supply stores shed 10,000.

The Labor Department uses a survey of mostly large businesses and government agencies to determine how many jobs are added or lost each month. That's the survey that produced the gain of 88,000 jobs for March. It uses a separate survey of households to calculate the unemployment rate.

In March, the number of people either working or looking for work fell by nearly 500,000. It was sharpest such drop since December 2010. And the number of Americans who said they were employed dropped nearly 210,000.

The percentage of adults in the labor force is a figure that economists call the participation rate. At 63.3 percent, it's the lowest since 1979. Normally during an economic recovery, an expanding economy lures job seekers back into the labor market. This time, many have stayed on the sidelines, and more have joined them.

Longer-term trends have helped keep the participation rate down. The vast generation of baby boomers has begun to retire. The share of men 20 and older in the labor force has dropped as manufacturing has shrunk. □

US trade deficit narrows to \$43B in February

MARTIN CRUTSINGER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. trade deficit unexpectedly narrowed in February as exports climbed close to an all-time high and the volume of imported crude oil fell to the lowest level in 17 years.

The gap between exports and imports shrank to \$43 billion in February, down 3.4 percent from January's revised \$44.5 billion, the Commerce Department said Friday.

It was the smallest trade imbalance since December when the gap had declined to \$38.1 billion, the lowest point in nearly three years.

Exports rose 0.8 percent to \$186 billion, close to the record high set in December. Stronger exports of U.S. energy products and autos offset declines in sales of airplanes and farm equipment.

Imports were flat at \$228.9 billion with the volume of crude oil falling to the lowest point since March 1996. The politically sensitive deficit with China shrank to \$23.4 billion, the lowest point in 11 months. Exports to the European Union were down 0.9 percent in February, compared to January, reflecting continued economic weakness as that region struggles with a recession triggered by a debt crisis.

Through the first two months

of this year, the U.S. deficit is running at an annual rate of \$524.5 billion, down slightly from last year's \$539.5 billion imbalance. Economists expect the deficit this year will narrow slightly, in part because of continued gains in U.S. energy exports. A narrower trade gap boosts growth

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nomics, said that he was worried that expectations for exports to keep rising faster than imports may fall short given uncertain global conditions.

"We are concerned that subdued global demand will hold back export growth. And the rest of the data released this week

the fewest in nine months. The economy as measured by the gross domestic product grew at an annual rate of 0.4 percent in the October-December quarter. Economists believe economic growth strengthened in the January-March quarter to around 3 percent.



A crane removes a container from a ship at the Port of Baltimore's Seagirt Marine Terminal in Baltimore. The U.S. trade deficit unexpectedly narrowed in February as exports climbed close to an all-time high and the volume of imported crude oil fell to the lowest level in 17 years, according to information released by the Commerce Department, Friday, April 5, 2013.

(AP Photo/Patrick Semansky)

because it means U.S. companies are earning more from overseas sales while U.S. consumers and businesses are spending less on foreign products.

But Paul Dales, senior U.S. economist at Capital Eco-

makes us more concerned that the domestic economy is a bit weaker than we thought," he said.

In a separate report Friday, the government said that the U.S. economy created just 88,000 jobs in March,

In addition to increases in U.S. energy exports, economists are also hopeful that exports of other products will rise this year as well, helped by stronger growth in some major export markets. □

EU clears Random House, Penguin merger deal

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union's antitrust watchdog on Friday gave its green light to the proposed merger of Penguin and Random House that will create the world's largest book publisher.

The deal will bring classics like George Orwell's "1984" and the recent literary phenomenon "Fifty Shades of Grey" by E.L. James under one umbrella. The merged publisher Penguin Random House is set to control about a quarter of the world's consumer book market.

Still, the deal does "not raise competition concerns, in

particular because the merged entity will continue to face several strong competitors," the EU Commission said in a statement.

The decision follows a similar unconditional green light by U.S. antitrust authorities in February. The Canadian Competition Bureau and other regulators are still reviewing the deal's impact.

Random House's German parent company, Bertelsmann SE, welcomed the EU's decision in a statement, calling it "another important stage" toward completing the merger.

Bertelsmann will own 53

percent of the new company, which will encompass all of both companies' publishing units in the U.S. and six other countries. Random House and Penguin, a division of Britain's Pearson PLC media group, are two of the so-called "big six" publishers in the U.S.

The merger is widely seen as an effort to counteract the power of Amazon.com, which has worried publishers by aggressively cutting prices on e-books.

Besides the U.S., the proposed merger includes Random House and Penguin Group's publishing

units in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, India and South Africa. Penguin's operations in China and Random House's publishers in Spain and Latin America also are part of the proposed merger. The combined company will control 26 percent of the global consumer publishing market, leaping ahead of the 17 percent share of French publisher Lagardere, according to analyst estimates.

The two media companies had announced the merger last October and expect to finalize the deal in the second half of this year. □

EURO BRIEFS

Hilco buys UK music chain HMV in rescue deal

LONDON (AP) — Hilco U.K., which restructures companies that have got into financial difficulties, says it has bought music and games retailer HMV, in a deal that will save one of Britain's longest-established chains.

Hilco says Friday it has agreed to buy 141 stores that employ 2,500 people, for an undisclosed sum. The deal also includes all nine branches of the Fopp music chain.

HMV, the last big retail chain selling recorded music in Britain, called in administrators Deloitte in January after more than 90 years in business.

Hilco chief executive Paul McGowan says the firm hopes to replicate some of the success it has had with HMV's Canadian arm, which it bought in 2011.

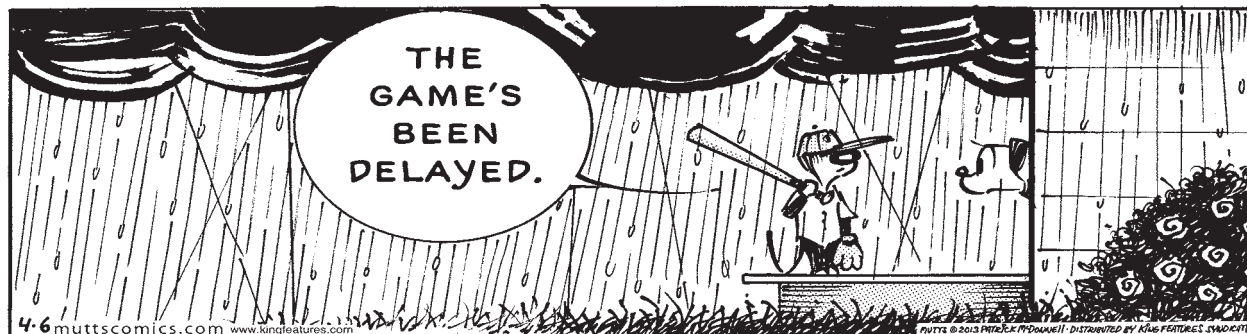
Lagardere to sell off stake in EADS by July

PARIS (AP) — Lagardere has confirmed its intention to sell its stake in European aerospace and defense giant EADS by the end of July.

The French multinational company has made no secret of its wish to get rid of its 7.5 percent stake in EADS, the parent company of plane maker Airbus and archrival of U.S.-based Boeing Co. In a statement Friday, Lagardere says a "substantial portion" of the proceeds will be distributed to its shareholders. No further details were disclosed.

The opportunity to sell the stake came last year when France and Germany agreed to shake up EADS' shareholding structure to reduce government influence. □

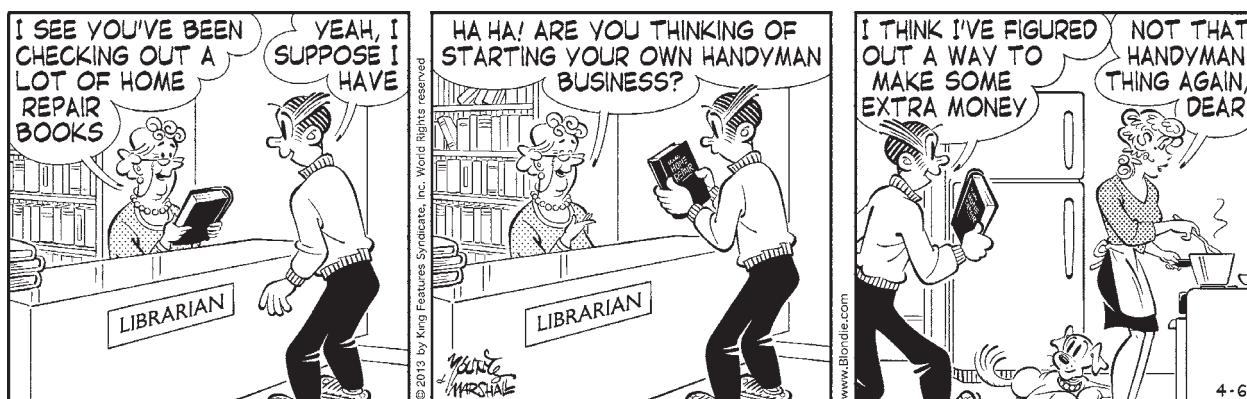
Mutts



6 Chix



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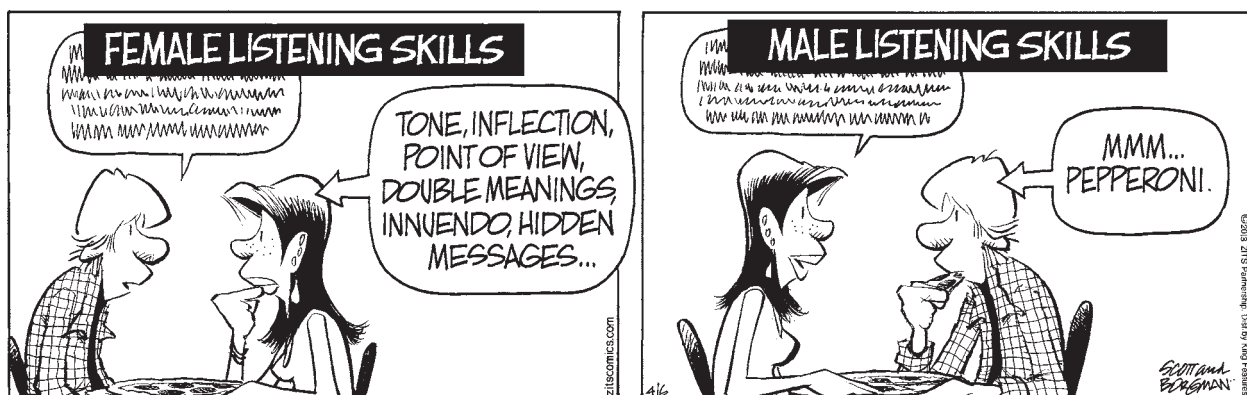
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Conceptis Sudoku

	1					8		
6			9					
			3		7		5	
	9		1					
		6	5		8	9		
			4				6	
7	5		8					
				4				8
		3					4	

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

4/06

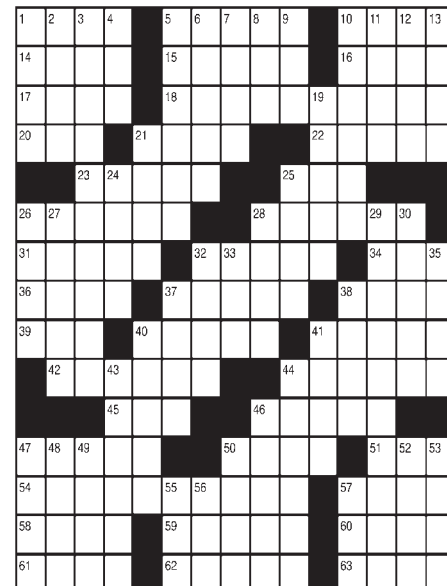
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

1	6	5	7	8	3	2	4	9
3	8	2	9	5	4	7	6	1
4	9	7	1	2	6	8	3	5
2	5	4	3	6	8	1	9	7
7	3	9	2	4	1	6	5	8
6	1	8	5	9	7	4	2	3
9	2	1	6	7	5	3	8	4
8	7	6	4	3	9	5	1	2
5	4	3	8	1	2	9	7	6

ACROSS

- 1 Baseball's ___ Ruth
- 5 Cemetery lots
- 10 Actor Nicolas
- 14 Filled with holy wonder
- 15 Of the kidneys
- 16 Above
- 17 Quayle & Fouts
- 18 The whole kit and caboodle
- 20 Needle's hole
- 21 Makes fun of
- 22 Roper's event
- 23 ___ point; center of attention
- 25 Not up to ___; substandard
- 26 In short supply
- 28 Actress Anjelica ___
- 31 Treaties
- 32 Juicy fruit
- 34 Mai tai ingredient
- 36 Look ___; investigate
- 37 Board
- 38 Take to
- 39 Excessively
- 40 Melon or squash
- 41 Gets furious
- 42 Going astray
- 44 Sumptuous
- 45 Ancient
- 46 Started
- 47 Kareem ___ Jabbar
- 50 Auction offers
- 51 Hole-making tool
- 54 Consoling
- 57 Hopping insect
- 58 Lunch spot
- 59 Burn
- 60 Arkin or Ladd
- 61 Shacks
- 62 Lawn tool
- 63 Little child



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

4/6/13

Friday's Puzzle Solved

UNCAP	SCAR	APES
SIEVE	NAVE	SEEP
ELDER	AWED	SARI
REENTERS	CLERIC	
	GULL	PAISLEY
SUPERB	POPE'S	
ATE	BOGUS	DOGGY
PASS	WOMEN	RULE
SHOAL	OASIS	NUN
MUSES	CHASMS	
APLENTY	DEAN	
CRINGE	MORTGAGE	
TONE	EPIC	TODAY
ONES	DESK	ERASE
REDS	SASS	RAMPS

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4/6/13

- 5 Put up money in advance
- 6 Raze
- 7 On ___ toes; alert
- 8 "The ___ Heel State"; North Carolina
- 9 Wily
- 10 Colleague
- 11 Enthusiastic
- 12 Cowboy Autry
- 13 Therefore
- 19 Garbage
- 21 Play divisions
- 24 Not fooled by
- 25 Hockey disk
- 26 Saliva
- 27 Narrow boat
- 28 ___ over; deliver
- 29 In the beginning
- 30 Heats in the microwave
- 32 Stopper
- 33 In one ___ and discard
- 35 Interlock
- 37 Small lake

DOWN

- 1 Commanded
- 2 Throw ___; discard
- 3 Donor
- 4 Asner & Koch

- 38 Molten rock
- 40 Breathing organs for fish
- 41 Cleaning cloths
- 43 Awakens
- 44 Account book
- 46 Pig out
- 47 Decorative overhead curve
- 48 Boyfriend
- 49 Cuckoo
- 50 Singer ___ Crosby
- 52 Feeble
- 53 Path
- 55 Do drugs
- 56 Get ___ of; shed
- 57 Obese

Iran mentions a new plan at talks as stalemate continues

DAVID M. HERSZENHORN
© 2013 New York Times

ALMATY, Kazakhstan – As negotiations resumed here Friday between Iran and the six world powers demanding that it curb its nuclear program, Iran said it had put forward a new “comprehensive proposal” that it hoped would “establish a new bedrock for cooperation.” The other negotiators, however, described Iran’s statement as a bewildering surprise and said they had not received any concrete new proposal. An afternoon negotiating session ended with little sign of additional clarity, and though officials said the talks would continue Saturday, they seemed to have hit a roadblock.

A Western official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the Iranian remarks essentially echoed a position articulated at talks in Moscow last June.

“We are somewhat puzzled by the Iranians’ characterization of what they presented at this morning’s plenary,” the official said. “There were some interesting but not fully explained general comments on our ideas.” The announcement of a new proposal, by Ali Baqeri, deputy head of the Iranian delegation, came after the opening session of talks as Iranian officials took a break for lunch and prayers. Baqeri did not offer any details. In the past, expansive language about a “comprehensive” solution has involved additional complicated issues, like the civil war in Syria, that seemed to dim rather than improve the prospects for an agreement.

With U.S. and European officials demanding that Iran show willingness to address

international concerns, Baqeri suggested that the Iranian delegation had gone even further.

“These steps are referred to as confidence-building measures, but they are part of a comprehensive set of measures,” he said at a news conference at a central Almaty hotel. “This is not distinct from that comprehensive step.” But at a second briefing at the end of the day’s talks, Baqeri acknowledged that the proposal put on the table had roughly the same contours as the plan offered in Moscow.

“The Islamic republic of Iran this morning proposed a practical method to implement the Moscow plan in a smaller scale,” he said.

Expectations for this latest round of negotiations have been modest at best, with little sign that the Iranian government was ready to accept an offer made by the six powers at the last round of talks in February: restrictions on its supply of dangerous enriched uranium in exchange for a modest easing of international sanctions. “We had a long and substantial discussion on the issues, but we remain a long way apart on the substance,” a Western diplomat said Friday. “We are now evaluating the situation and will meet again tomorrow.” Although U.S. and European officials arrived expressing guarded hope of a breakthrough, the lead Iranian negotiator began his visit with a speech to university students in which he insisted on his country’s unfettered right to develop a civilian nuclear program and accused the larger powers of hypocrisy because they have nuclear arms. □

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NASA plans to capture, explore asteroid

SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. space agency is planning for a robotic spaceship to capture a small asteroid and park it near the moon for astronauts to explore, a top senator disclosed Friday.

The plan would speed up by four years the existing mission to land astronauts on an asteroid by bringing the space rock closer to Earth, Sen. Bill Nelson said. The robotic ship would capture the 500-ton, 25-foot (450 metric-ton, 7.6-meter) asteroid in 2019. Then using an Orion space capsule, now being developed, a crew of about four astronauts would nuzzle up next to the rock in 2021 for

spacewalking exploration, according to a government document obtained by The Associated Press.



In this Jan. 13, 2013 file photo, the Orion Exploration Flight Test 1 crew module is seen in the Operations and Checkout building during a media tour at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla.

Associated Press

Nelson said this would help NASA develop the capability to nudge away a dangerous asteroid if one headed to Earth in the future. It also would be training for a future mission to send astronauts to Mars in the 2030s, he said.

Nelson, chairman of the Senate science and space subcommittee, said President Barack Obama is putting \$100 million in planning money for the accelerated asteroid mission in the 2014 budget that comes out next week. The money would be used to find the right small asteroid.

"It really is a clever concept," Nelson said in a news conference in Florida, the state where NASA launches take place. "Go find your

ideal candidate for an asteroid. Go get it robotically and bring it back."

While there are thousands of asteroids that size out there, finding the right one that comes by Earth at just the right time to be captured will not be easy, said Donald Yeomans, who heads NASA's Near Earth Object program that monitors close-by asteroids. He said once a suitable rock is found, it would be captured with the space equivalent of "a baggie with a drawstring. You bag it. Yeomans said an asteroid of that size is no threat to Earth because it would burn up should it inadvertently enter Earth's atmosphere. The mission as Nelson described is perfectly safe, he said. □

China bird flu mutates, might infect mammals

GILLIAN WONG
MALCOLM RITTER
Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — In a worrisome sign, a bird flu in China appears to have mutated so that it can spread to other animals, raising the potential for a bigger threat to people, scientists said Wednesday. So far the flu has sickened nine people in China and killed three. It's not clear how they became infected, but there's no evidence that the virus is spreading easily among people.

But the virus can evidently move through poultry without making them sick, experts said, making it difficult to track the germ in flocks. The findings are preliminary and need further testing.

In the wake of the illnesses, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention shared the genetic sequence of the H7N9 virus with other scientists to help study how the virus might behave in different animals and situations.

One scientist said the sequence raises concern about a potential global epidemic, but that it's impossible to give a precise estimate of how likely that is.

"At this stage it's still unlikely to become a pandemic," said Richard Webby, director of a World Health Organization flu center at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn. "We should be concerned (but) there's no alarm bells ringing yet," he said.

The virus has genetic markers that would help it infect people, Webby said. That makes him worry about a pandemic a bit more than he does for other bird flu viruses, such as the H5N1 virus that emerged a decade ago, he said.

"The tentative assessment of this virus is that it may cause human infection or epidemic," said Dr. Masato Tashiro, director of the WHO's influenza research center in Tokyo and one of the specialists who studied the genetic data, "It is still not yet adapted to humans completely, but important factors have already changed."

Flu viruses evolve constantly, and scientists say such changes have made H7N9 more capable of infecting pigs.

Pigs are a particular concern because bird and human flu viruses can mingle there, potentially producing a bird virus with heightened ability to spread between humans, said Dr. William Schaffner, a flu expert at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. That's what happened in



A duck stands near a warning sign at an amusement park in Beijing, China, Wednesday, April 3, 2013.

Associated Press

2009 with swine flu. The scientists who inspected the genetic data also said that based on information from the genes and Chinese lab testing, the H7N9 virus appears able to infect some birds without causing any noticeable symptoms. Without obvious outbreaks of dying chickens or birds, authorities could face a challenge in trying to trace the source of the infection and stop the spread.

If there are no obvious symptoms in birds or pigs "nobody recognizes the infection in animals around them. Then the transmission from animal to human may occur," Tashiro said. "In terms of this phenomenon, it's more problematic." This behavior is unlike the

virulent H5N1 strain, which set off warnings when it began ravaging poultry across Asia in 2003. H5N1 has since killed 360 people worldwide, mostly after close contact with infected birds. □

If the latest virus continues to spread in China and beyond, "it would be an even bigger problem than with H5N1, in some sense, because with H5N1 you can see evidence of poultry dying," said University of Hong Kong microbiologist Malik Peiris, who also examined the genetic information. He urged China to widely test healthy birds for the virus in live animal markets in the parts of the country where the human infections have been reported. □

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Halle Berry, Olivier Martinez expecting a baby

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Halle Berry is pregnant. A representative for the 46-year-old actress confirms that Berry and her fiancé, Olivier Martinez, are expecting their first child together. Publicist Meredith O'Sullivan Wasson offered no other details. Berry and Martinez announced their engagement last year. Berry has a daughter with her ex-boyfriend, Gabriel Aubry. The two settled their custody battle over the 5-year-old in November. This is the first child for Martinez. □



This Oct. 24, 2012 file photo shows actors Olivier Martinez, left, and Halle Berry at the Los Angeles premiere of Berry's film, "Cloud Atlas," in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles. Associated Press

January Jones: Fashion criticism 'makes me laugh'

NICOLE EVATT Associated Press BEVERLY HILLS, California (AP) — AMC's "Mad Men" drama may garner attention for bringing back '60s glamour, but January Jones, known for her daring red carpet looks, says she doesn't care what critics think of her personal style. "I think that fashion is an art," the 35-year-old actress, who has topped many best- and worst-dressed lists, said in a recent interview. "It's a fun way to express yourself. ... And I sort of like not pleasing people a bit."



In this Wed., March 20, 2013 file photo, January Jones, a cast member in "Mad Men," poses at the season six premiere of the drama series at the Directors Guild of America, in Los Angeles. Associated Press

Take, for example, the Prabal Gurung gown she wore to this year's Screen Actors Guild Awards. Critics both praised and criticized the bold black-and-white structured ensemble. "It makes me laugh when the 'Fashion Police' hate what I wear," Jones said. "I loved my whole look that night. It was really fun. And I just like people looking at me like I was crazy." Another daring style that left critics divided: her dramatic 2012 Emmys look. Jones made a statement with a severe slicked-back hairdo, smoky cat eyes and a semisheer black organza number by Zac Posen. □

Wesley Snipes leaves prison after tax sentence



In this Sept. 9, 2009 file photo, Wesley Snipes poses during the photo call for the film "Brooklyn's Finest" at the 66th edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy. Associated Press

LEWIS RUN, Pennsylvania (AP) — Wesley Snipes has been released from a federal prison after serving time on tax charges. Snipes was convicted in 2008. He was released Tuesday and placed under home confinement. A Bureau of Corrections spokes-

woman said Friday he'll be overseen by the New York Community Corrections Office until July 19. Snipes entered prison in December 2010 to begin a three-year sentence for failure to file income tax returns. Snipes belonged to a group that challenged

the government's right to collect taxes. U.S. prosecutors say he failed to file returns for at least a decade and owed millions of dollars in back taxes. The 50-year-old actor has appeared in dozens of films, including the blockbuster "Blade" trilogy. □

HBO is making Ephron documentary with her son



This Nov. 3, 2010 file photo shows author, screenwriter and director Nora Ephron at her home in New York. Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Nora Ephron will be the subject of an HBO documentary being made by her one of her sons, journalist Jacob Bernstein. The network said Friday that the project, titled "Everything is Copy," will also have Vanity Fair editor Graydon Carter as executive producer. Ephron died at age 71 last year. She was the writer behind films "When Harry

Met Sally," "You've Got Mail" and "Sleepless in Seattle." Her last project is the current Broadway play about journalist Mike McAlary, with Tom Hanks in the starring role. The documentary's title is a reference to Ephron's feeling that all of life's experiences provide fodder for a writer. The documentary project was first reported in the Hollywood Reporter. □

They're rolling: Stones add 2 shows to their tour

MESFIN FEKADU
AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — If you're upset that the Rolling Stones won't be coming to your city on their upcoming tour, don't be too stressed — the rockers say more shows may be added.

"Normally when you announce a tour like this, you announce part of it, you leave it to be, you see what happens, you might do a date here and another date there. You don't want to be completely hand fast, so you do leave some dates in between," Mick Jagger said in an interview Thursday. "So we'll see what happens."

The Stones announced this week that they'll kick off their "50 and Counting" tour in Los Angeles; the date will be announced later. The second show is in Oakland, Calif., on May 5. They'll also visit Las Vegas, Toronto, Chicago and Bos-



This 2005 file photo, originally supplied by the Rolling Stones, shows the group, from left, Charlie Watts, Keith Richards, Mick Jagger, and Ron Wood posing during a photo shoot.

ton, and wrap in Philadelphia on June 18.

On Friday, the band said second shows have been added in Toronto and Chicago. The announcement came months after the foursome performed a sold-out, five-city stint in New York, New Jersey and London. Jagger called those shows a test.

"We just said, 'Let's do these five shows before Christmas and see how it goes and see if we enjoy it, see if the audience seems to have a good time, and if that works, then we'll try to see if we'll do more,'" he said. "We still wanted to keep it kind of limited. We didn't want to have that yawning (tour) of hun-

dreds of shows lined up for the next 18 months. I just thought it would be good if we booked a small tour, and then, you know, if we want to do more, we'll do more." The Stones have at least three days in between tour stops, a sign that more shows may be added. Or the time could be used for rest.

"I think it's a little bit of both," Keith Richards said in a separate interview Thursday. "The band wants to pace themselves, but at the same time ... I guess what's been announced is the bare-bones and we will play it by ear from there." The Stones' last global tour kicked off in 2005 and wrapped in 2007.

Jagger, 69, said he's getting older — and performing can be tough.

"I just have to train a lot and keep really fit. I want to do these moves, but I can't do them because if I did,

I'd probably screw up," he said, laughing. "You just got to do what's within your capabilities. I don't want it to look wrong, so I'm going to stay within my boundaries." The Stones' recent tour featured special guests such as Bruce Springsteen and Lady Gaga, and there could be more surprises onstage.

"I have a feeling there's more openness about playing it the same way," Richards said. "I can't name names or make promises, but that area of the show is open."

The veteran band, which also includes Charlie Watts and Ronnie Wood, will headline the Glastonbury Festival on June 29 and will perform at London's Hyde Park on July 6. Former bandmate Mick Taylor, a member of the Stones from 1969 through 1974, will be a special guest throughout the tour. □

Craig, Weisz to star in 'Betrayal' on Broadway

MARK KENNEDY
AP Drama Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Real-life husband and wife Daniel Craig and Rachel Weisz are to play an adulterous stage couple in a Broadway production this fall of Harold Pinter's "Betrayal," the latest blast of high-beam celebrities to be lured to Times Square.

Weisz will make her Broadway debut in Pinter's 1978 study in deception, which charts an extramarital affair in reverse.

Her character, Emma, is married to Craig's Robert, but is having an affair with Jerry, played by rising star Rafe Spall.

James Bond star Craig last appeared on Broadway in 2009 in "A Steady Rain," where he received positive notices opposite Hugh Jackman even though the play itself did not.

The married movie stars will join a long list of recent film

celebrities to hit Broadway, including Al Pacino, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Matthew Broderick, Jessica Chastain, Robin Williams, Scarlett Johansson, Katie Holmes and Samuel L. Jackson. Others celebrities soon to make their debuts include Zooey Deschanel and Amber Tamblyn.

Casting movie stars hasn't always turned into box office gold. Hoffman's revival of Arthur Miller's "Death of Salesman," Jackson's turn as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. on "The Mountaintop" and the Pacino-led "Glengarry Glen Ross" revival all recouped their investments. But Chastain's revival of "The Heiress," Holmes' "Dead Accounts" and Johansson's version of "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" did not.

Craig has reportedly signed on for at least two more Bond films following "Skyfall," which was the first

Bond film to rake in more than \$1 billion in revenue. It also won two Oscars including one for Adele's theme song.

Broadway veteran Mike Nichols will direct "Betrayal," which previews from Oct. 1 and opens Nov. 3 at New York's Barrymore Theatre. The announcement was made Friday. □



In this Jan. 13, 2013 file photo, Daniel Craig, left, and Rachel Weisz arrive at the 70th Annual Golden Globe Awards at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Associated Press

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Freedom Loses One



DAVID BROOKS

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I don't think we've paused sufficiently to celebrate the wonderful recent defeat for the cause of personal freedom. After all, these sorts of defeats don't happen every day.

Over the past 40 years, personal freedom has been on a nearly uninterrupted winning streak. In the 1960s, we saw a great expansion of social and lifestyle freedom. In the 1980s, we saw a great expansion of economic freedom. Since then, we've had everything from jeans commercials to rock anthems to political conventions celebrating freedom as the highest ideal.

People are much more at liberty these days to follow their desires, unhampered by social convention, religious and ethnic traditions and legal restraints.

The big thinkers down through the ages warned us this was going to have downsides. Alexis de Tocqueville and Emile Durkheim thought that if people are left perfectly free to pursue their individual desires, they will discover their desires are unlimited and unquenchable. They'll turn inward and become self-absorbed. Society will become atomized. You'll end up with more loneliness and less community.

Other big thinkers believed that if people are left perfectly free to follow their desires, their baser ones will end up dominating their nobler ones. For these writers, the goal in life is not primarily to be free but to be good. Being virtuous often means thwarting your inclinations, obeying a power outside yourself. It means maintaining a balance between liberty and restraint, restricting freedom for the sake of an ordered existence. As Edmund Burke put it:

"Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites. ... Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

Recently, the balance between freedom and restraint has been thrown out of whack. People no longer even have a language to explain why freedom should sometimes be limited. The results are as predicted. A decaying social fabric, especially among the less fortunate. A decline in

marriage. More children raised in unsteady homes. Higher debt levels as people spend to satisfy their cravings.

But last week saw a setback for the forces of maximum freedom. A representative of millions of gays and lesbians went to the Supreme Court and asked the court to help put limits on their own freedom of choice. They asked for marriage.

Marriage is one of those institutions — along with religion and military service — that restricts freedom. Marriage is about making a commitment that binds you for decades to come. It narrows your options on how you will spend your time, money and attention.

Whether they understood it or not, the gays and lesbians represented at the court committed themselves to a certain agenda. They committed themselves to an institution that involves surrendering autonomy. They committed themselves to the idea that these self-restrictions should be reinforced by the state. They committed themselves to the idea that lifestyle choices are not just private affairs but work better when they are embedded in law.

And far from being baffled by this attempt to use state power to restrict individual choice, most Americans seem to be applauding it. Once, gay culture was erroneously associated with bathhouses and nightclubs. Now, the gay and lesbian rights movement is associated with marriage and military service. Once the movement was associated with self-sacrifice, it was bound to become popular.

Americans may no longer have a vocabulary to explain why freedom should sometimes be constricted, but they like it when they see people trying to do it. Once Americans acknowledged gay people exist, then, of course, they wanted them enmeshed in webs of obligation.

I suspect that this shift in public acceptance will be permanent, unless it turns out that marriages are more unstable when two people of the same gender are involved.

And, who knows, maybe we'll see other spheres in life where restraints are placed on maximum personal choice. Maybe there will be sumptuary codes that will make lavish spending and CEO salaries unseemly. Maybe there will be social codes so that people understand that the act of creating a child includes a lifetime commitment to give him or her an organized home. Maybe voters will restrain their appetite for their grandchildren's money. Maybe more straight people will marry.

The proponents of same-sex marriage used the language of equality and rights in promoting their cause, because that is the language we have floating around. But, if it wins, same-sex marriage will be a victory for the good life, which is about living in a society that induces you to narrow your choices and embrace your obligations. □



Investor Activism Gone Wild



JOE NOCERA

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William Ackman, the investor-activist who runs the \$12 billion hedge fund, Pershing Square Capital, is like one of those guys you used to see in a certain kind of old-fashioned comedy. On one shoulder sits an angel, encouraging his better nature. On the other sits a devil, whispering temptation.

When he listens to the angel, Ackman does amazing things. He made a \$25 million contribution to the Newark, N.J., school system, an early and important match against the \$100 million that Facebook's founder, Mark Zuckerberg, put up in September 2010. Yet unlike virtually every other actor involved in the Zuckerberg grant, who have been squabbling ever since, Ackman attached virtually no strings to his donation. He wants his money to be used to help Newark's schoolchildren — not to push someone's reform agenda.

Then there's his current Herbalife crusade. After making a \$1 billion bet that the stock would fall, Ackman released a lengthy report alleging that the company was running an illegal pyramid scheme. I have been sadly constrained from writing columns about the Ackman-Herbalife battle because the company had the wit to hire my fiancée's employer, David Boies, after Ackman unveiled his attack. I was, as

they say, "conflicted out."

But I will say this: Pyramid schemes are a hidden scourge, hurting millions of people seduced by their get-rich-quick promises. Until Ackman began agitating, the federal government had largely capitulated to the "multilevel marketing" industry (as it likes to be called), even exempting it from a law passed a few years ago specifically aimed at curbing pyramid schemes. Ackman has been heroic in taking on this litigious, well-financed industry. Not since Jim Chanos went after Enron has a hedge fund manager been willing to question whether a company was actually a criminal enterprise. That takes guts.

Also, his track record as an activist has been good; you don't get \$12 billion in assets if you don't win more than you lose.

But there is always that devil on the other shoulder. A few years ago, Ackman took a position in Target's stock. Because of the recession, retailers such as Target were struggling. To get the stock up, Ackman began throwing out ideas that amounted to financial engineering. He then mounted an expensive proxy fight to get on the board, which thankfully, he lost. The stock has since rebounded. Target didn't need financial engineering; it just needed a better economy.

Which brings me to his latest retail foray, J.C. Penney. Is there a single word that can sum up what has befallen J.C. Penney since Ackman took a stake in the company? Yes: disaster.

J.C. Penney had long catered to lower-middle-class families searching for sales. Its chief executive, Mike Ullman, who had been at the helm since 2004, was widely viewed as solid, if a tad unimaginative. He had led J.C. Penney to some of the most profitable years in its history. But, by the fall of 2010, hurt by the same recession that hurt Target, Penney's stock was way down. That's when Ackman showed up.

Being a big-time activist-investor, Ackman could hardly allow Ull-

man to remain at the helm. Activists have to be, you know, active. Within a year, he landed the executive everyone in retail wanted: Ron Johnson, who had built Apple's retail business. Imagine: A Steve Jobs disciple was going to run downmarket J.C. Penney. What could possibly go wrong? Pretty much everything. Johnson decided to eliminate the sales that had always been J.C. Penney's trademark and move to everyday low prices. He thus alienated the core J.C. Penney customer. He kept talking about how he was going to apply the lessons he had learned at Apple to J.C. Penney, even though the companies sold completely different products to completely different customers. As the core customers departed, Johnson and J.C. Penney didn't have the merchandise or cachet to attract a more upscale, Target-type customer. People abandoned J.C. Penney. At the end of 2012, J.C. Penney announced that its revenues had fallen a staggering \$4.3 billion. It has laid off some 20,000 people. Walter Loeb, the former longtime retail analyst at Morgan Stanley who now blogs for Forbes.com, is predicting that its revenues will decline another 22 percent in the first quarter of 2013.

Lately, Johnson has brought back sales and devised a new strategy, revolving around "stores within stores" — selling merchandise much the way Bloomingdale's does. One of its ministores will be devoted to Martha Stewart-designed home goods. You may have read about that. Macy's, which says it has a contract that prevents Martha Stewart from selling housewares to other retailers, has sued. On the stand during the trial, I'm told, Johnson kept referring to his experience at Apple. Some people never learn. The question is no longer whether Johnson will learn in time. If the quarter is as bad as Loeb is predicting, he'll be gone soon. The question is whether Ackman has learned anything. The next time the devil whispers in his ear, let's hope he doesn't listen. □

Texas refinery is Saudi foothold in the United States

CLIFFORD KRAUSS

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PORT ARTHUR, Texas – It is hard to imagine the desert sands of the Persian Gulf having any connection to this swampy refinery port known for Cajun food, sport fishing and being the birthplace of Janis Joplin. But right in the middle of town stands a strategic outpost for Saudi Arabia's global ambitions, although one that the Saudis appear loath to publicize.

ing to the urgency for the Saudis is the fact that the U.S. is vastly increasing its production and replacing OPEC crude with that from oil sands in Canada.

"The Saudis are securing a home for their heavy crude," said Fadel Gheit, a senior oil analyst at Oppenheimer & Co. "But there is no question that security is also part of the equation. In Saudi Arabia, oil and politics always mix."

The refinery expansion,

side the refinery's small museum. Tucked away in an administration building, the museum also includes photographs of some visiting Saudi Aramco executives. Only a couple of Saudi trainees work at the plant, which has roughly 2,000 employees and contractors.

"They want to be relevant but invisible," Lawrence J. Goldstein, a director of the Energy Policy Research Foundation, which is partly

months.

"Our commitment to this market is unwavering," he told energy executives at the IHS-CERA energy conference in Houston in March shortly after his most recent visit.

Saudi Aramco declined to comment on the refinery or the company's relationship with Motiva Enterprises. But in an interview, Robert W. Pease, Motiva's president and chief executive, praised the Saudi commit-

But he added that "I think the relationship has gotten stronger."

Saudi Aramco and Shell keep the commercial terms of their agreement confidential.

"Trying to get into any rights, sales rights or obligations, or any of those, I couldn't begin to talk about it," Pease said.

But several experts say that Motiva guarantees that a large amount of Saudi oil will be imported. They also



The Motiva oil refinery in Port Arthur, Texas. The Motiva refinery, the largest in the U.S. and owned by Saudi Aramco and Royal Dutch Shell, ensures a bigger market for Saudi crude and a stronger global voice for the kingdom. (Michael Stravato/The New York Times)

The giant Motiva oil refinery, which just completed a \$10 billion expansion that makes it the largest processor of gasoline, diesel and other petroleum products in the United States, is owned by Saudi Aramco and Royal Dutch Shell in a 50-50 partnership. Saudi Aramco's investment in the refinery expansion is meant to ensure that Saudi Arabia will retain an important market for its crude in the United States at a time when U.S. politicians are declaring their intention to wean the country off imported oil. Add-

which has had its share of cost overruns and mishaps, is nothing if not mammoth. It contains 1 million feet of pipe and 1,000 miles of instrument cables; 63,000 concrete pilings were driven into the swamplands to stabilize the skyscraping distillation and heating towers.

But what is almost hidden at this marvel of chemical engineering is the critical Saudi Arabian presence, aside from a couple of Saudi Aramco coffee-table books on display in the executive offices and a pair of Saudi and Saudi Aramco flags in-

financed by the oil industry, said of the Saudis.

He added, "The Motiva relationship guarantees the Saudis an important but subtle footprint in the United States, and they want to have some negotiating strength when geopolitical issues in the Middle East and elsewhere arise."

The importance of the refinery to Saudi Arabia has been underscored by Khalid Al-Falih, Saudi Aramco's president and chief executive, who has visited the refinery twice in the last year and is scheduled to come back again in a few

ment to supplying oil to the United States.

"The fact that Saudi Arabia continues to supply crude into the United States – even during periods when market pricing in the East suggests more should have gone there – is beneficial to the American customer," he said.

Pease answers to a board that consists of Shell and Saudi Aramco executives. "We've had some challenging issues," Pease said. "How do you fund this project? What are the expectations? And, we have some robust dialogue."

say that Saudi Aramco discounts Saudi crude sales to Motiva through various accounting adjustments and credit lines with generous terms.

"The Saudis are going to have to keep discounting the crude for the joint venture to buy it," said David L. Goldwyn, who served as the State Department's coordinator for international energy affairs in the first Obama administration. "That makes it probably first a Saudi geopolitical asset by guaranteeing some market share even at a discounted price." □